Issue 196 April/May 2022 £6.25

www.italytravelandlife.com

PEOPLE PROPERTY TRAVEL

ITALY@YOUR
FINGERTIPS

How to enjoy your next Italian adventure at home

ITALIAN ESCAPES

48 HOURS IN MAJELLA Explore Abruzzo's unspoilt natural wilderness

DISCOVER THE CHARMS OF HISTORIC URBINO

INTRIGUE IN VENICE When Tintoretto met the monks of San Rocco

On test: the King of Kalian cheese



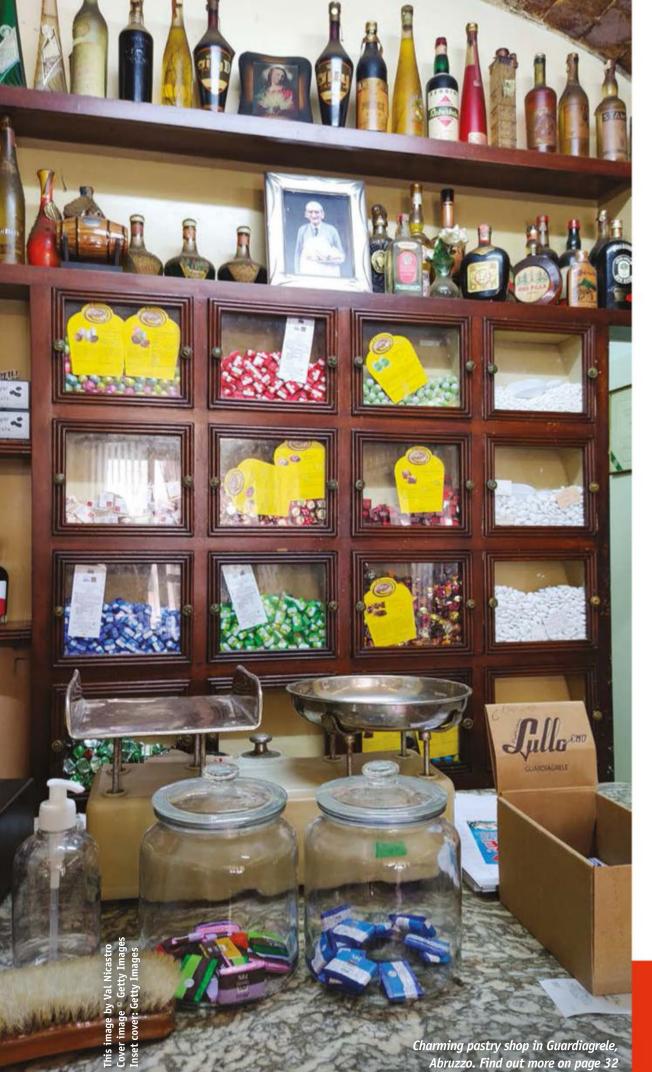
Living in Le Marche What makes this region a property hotspot?



FESTIVALS IN 2022







Benvennti...



A warm welcome to the latest Italia! magazine - I'm excited for you to read it as it's another packed issue celebrating the best of Italy. We've all spent what seems a long time contemplating our favourite country from afar but as I write, it really does seems as if we are on the cusp of change.

Travel is tentatively opening up, and making plans is a concept back on the agenda!

Baby steps, as they say – and, as we might not all be rushing back to Italy just yet, our 'At Your Fingertips' virtual courses feature will bring il bel paese closer to you, wherever you are. We also welcome the return of live opera festivals to Italy with our essential opera lovers' guide – which includes hotel and restaurant recommendations if you are making plans! Le Marche is also a star of this issue – we travel to the historic city of Urbino as well as taking a look at the property prospects and quality of life in this captivating region.

In the kitchen, there are plenty of Italian recipes to rustle up as well as a new series from resident chef Mario Matassa, on a mission to get friends and family together to share his simple, seasonal dishes. We taste the king of Italian cheese, Parmigiano Reggiano – and sample vibrant wines from Sicily, pure sunshine in a glass! All this, plus your photos, our dual-language Gazzetta, what's on - and much more!

Amanda

Amanda Robinson Editor

PS. Our 132-page Lakes & Islands Guide is now on sale at www.italytravelandlife.com/specials (£9.99 incl. p&p, and don't miss our brand-new Venice & Veneto Guide out on 7th April!

NEW SUBSCRIPTION OFFER!

You can now pay for *Italia!* magazine issue by issue, when you subscribe using Direct Debit. You pay £4.50 every issue, that's a saving of 28 per cent! Turn to page 30 for details and for the US, please turn to page 73.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS









ADRIAN MOURBY has compiled our opera lovers' guide in this ssue. An international opera correspondent and regular contributor to *Italia!*, he is well-placed to share all the details of

upcoming live opera festivals taking place in Italy this year - after recent years of virtual performances and cancellations. Find out what's taking place and where on page 44.



RACHAEL MARTIN Inspired by the rise in popularity of virtual pandemic, Rachael has put together a wealth of information to bring Italy closer, until we can be there

in person. Find out how to book an online quided tour around Pisa or other cultural hotspots, a wine tasting course or even an Italian cycling trip! Read more on page 24.



VAL NICASTRO had the opportunity to explore the of Majella in Abruzzo for us this issue. In an untouched natural landscape of awesome views, fascinating

COVER The Leaning Tower of

folk tales, as well as a priceless heritage of art and culture, this was a voyage of discovery right off the beaten track. You can find out more on page 32.





IN THIS ISSUE July 2022



32 48 HOURS IN MAJELLA

Officially listed in the UNESCO Geopark network, Majella in Abruzzo is a dream for nature lovers, as **Val Nicastro** discovers.

44 ITALIAN OPERA FESTIVALS 2022

Adrian Mourby celebrates the best of Italy's opera festivals and points out what to look forward to this year.

52 TOP TEN GUIDE TO URBINO

Chris Allsop explains why your first cultural stop in Le Marche should be this Renaissance jewel of a town.



24 ITALY @ YOUR FINGERTIPS

Rachael Martin looks at how you can bring Italy closer to you with online experiences.

39 IL FURIOSO & THE BROTHERS OF SAN ROCCO

Joe Gartman on how Jacopo Robusti made a name (or two) for himself in Venice.

FOOD & DRINK

62 GOING FOR GOLD

Make the most of these indulgent butter recipes by **James Martin**.

66 BUY ITALIA!

Parmigiano Reggiano, one of Italy's most prized cheeses.

68 SIMPLE MEDITERRANEAN

These sunny recipes by **Claudia Roden** will brighten up the dullest day.

70 CRUNCHY CROSTINI

Take your snack game to the next level with these quick and tasty Italian bites.

74 SATURDAY NIGHT IN

New series! Get friends and family together and bring the flavours of Italy right to your table with Mario Matassa.

79 DRINK ITALIA!

Old grapes, new wines - our Sicilian selection.

LIVING

84 LIVING IN LE MARCHE

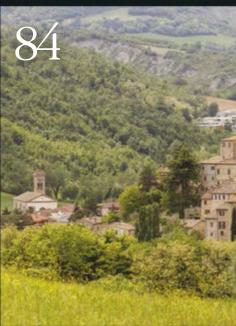
This unspoilt region of pretty hills, golden beaches and mystical mountains is much loved by foreign buyers, says **Fleur Kinson**.

94 PROPERTY MARKET PREDICTIONS

Where the Le Marche property is headed now.

96 PROPERTY SHOWCASE

The latest house-buying opportunities.













MORE ITALIA!

8 NEWS & VIEWS
Catch up with all the hottest stories
from and about Italy.

14 READERS' PHOTO COMPETITION
Send us your travel photos and
win a bottle of premium
Villa Sandi prosecco!

18 IN PRINT

The latest books for your literary delectation.

19 TOP 5 EVENTS

What's on in Italy this April and May.

20 TOP PICKS

The best of the latest Italian products to reach the market.

22 VIEWPOINT

La chiesa della Nostra Signora di Lourdes crowns the skyline of the city of Verona.

30 SUBSCRIBE TO ITALIA! MAGAZINE

You can now pay for *Italia!* magazine issue by issue, when you subscribe using Direct Debit. You pay £4.50 every issue, that's a saving of 28 per cent! Turn to page 30 for details and for the US, please turn to page 73.

42 SPEAK ITALIA!

Tom Alberto Bull reports on the passing of Assunta Maresca, a female mafia boss.

58 PAST ITALIA!

The five domes of Venice's Basilica di San Marco.

98 ITALIA! HERITAGE

The birthplace of St Francis remains a globally important site of Christian pilgrimage.

99 NEXT MONTH

Cooking alla Giudia

What's up in the next issue of Italia!

ON THE COVER



Stay connected!

Keep in touch all month long with Italia! magazine - updates, news, features, recipes and much more from your favourite magazine online





For everyone who loves Italy italytravelandlife.com

Don't forget, you can write to us at Italia! magazine, Anthem Publishing, Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath BA1 6PL or email italia@anthem.co.uk

ITALIA!

www.italytravelandlife.com

EDITOR Amanda Robinson amanda.robinson@anthem.co.uk ART EDITOR Sam Grover SUB EDITOR Jon Palmer

CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Allsop, Tom Bull, Joe Gartman, Fleur Kinson, Elisabeth Mackenzie, James Martin, Rachael Martin, Mario Matassa, Adrian Mourby, Valentina Nicastro, Jenny Oldaker, Claudia Roden

> PUBLISHER Sally FitzGerald sally.fitzgerald@anthem.co.uk

ADVERTISING MANAGER Adrian Major adrian@majormediasales.com

> MARKETING Rosie Pankhurst rosie.pankhurst@anthem.co.uk

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Jenny Cook jenny.cook@anthem.co.uk

MANAGING DIRECTOR Simon Lewis simon.lewis@anthem.co.uk

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Jon Bickley jon.bickley@anthem.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

a +44 (0) 1371 853 609 shop@italytravelandlife.com Price (6 issues) £24.50 UK basic annual rate

PRINT William Gibbons & Sons Ltd **a** +44 (0) 1902 730011

DISTRIBUTION Marketforce (UK) Ltd 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP (UK) ☎ +44 (0) 330 390 6555

> LICENSING ENQUIRIES Regina Erak regina.erak@globalworks.co.uk

IMAGES

All images © Getty Images unless otherwise stated

PRIZE DRAW TERMS AND CONDITIONS

PRIZE DRAW TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By entering our prize draws you are bound by these rules. The winners will be drawn at random from all entries that answer correctly before the closing date. The prize draw will take place after the closing date and the winners will be notified within 28 days of the draw. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. No employees of Anthem Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this prize draw, or any member of their close family, may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Anthem Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Anthem Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. All entries must be received by the closing date. One entry per person. No purchase necessary. Copies of winners' list are available by written request from Anthem Publishing, Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath BA1 6PL. Anthem Publishing, Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath BA1 6PL.

Italia!, ISSN 1744-7968, is published bi-monthly by Anthem Publishing Ltd,
Suite 6, Piccadilly House, London Road, Bath, BA1 6PL, UK.

The US annual subscription price is \$57.50 (6 issues). Airfreight and mailing in the USA is by
agent named Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY, 11434,
USA. Application to mail at periodicals postage prices is pending at Jamaica, NY, 11431, USA.

US Postmaster: Send address changes to Italia! Worldnet Shipping Inc.,
156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY, 11434, USA.
Subscription records are maintained at ESco Services, Trinity House,
Sculpins Lane, Wethersfield, Braintree, CM7 4AY, UK.
Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

ANTHEM PUBLISHING





Anthem Publishing Piccadilly House London Road Bath BA1 6PL

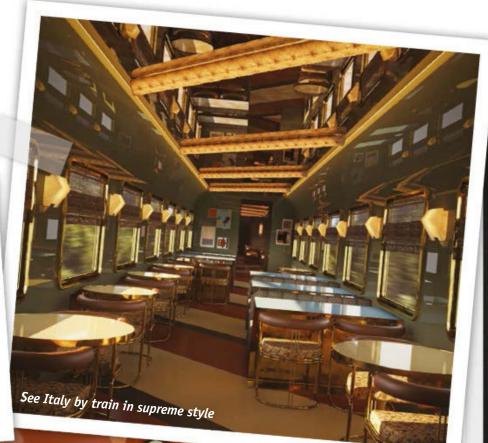
a +44 (0) 1225 489989 (advertising) italia@anthem.co.uk



All paper used in this publication comes from responsibly managed forests.
All content copyright Anthem Publishing Ltd, 2022, all rights reserved. While we make every effort to ensure that the factual content of *Italia!* is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or resold without the prior consent of Anthem Publishing Ltd. Anthem Publishing recognises all copyrights contained within this issue. Where possible we acknowledge the copyright holder.







Make tracks in style

An icon of Italian travel is set to take to the rails next year, providing a brand new entry for the bucket lists of Italophiles everywhere. A new 'Orient Express' journey will offer passengers a selection of itineraries across Italy, as well as international routes from Italy to Istanbul, Split and Paris, when the Orient Express La Dolce Vita takes to the rails in 2023. Transporting its guests in the lap of luxury, the new Orient Express service (owned by the Accor hotel group) encompasses six trains designed by the Milan-based Dimorestudio, whose décor eschews the Art Deco look of the Venice-Simplon Orient Express in favour of mid-century interiors and the bold patterns and colours of the 1960s and '70s. These high-end travel experiences are something to which all travel buffs and Italy lovers can aspire, offering an eminently memorable adventure. Stephen Alden, CEO of Raffles and Orient Express, Accor, said: "It is thrilling to be bringing the refined nomadic spirit of Orient Express back to life for a new generation of travellers." Find out more at www.all.accor.com



5 foodie reasons to visit Naples

You can't visit Naples without sampling the delights of the ubiquitous pizza! Naples saw the creation of the Margherita pizza during a royal visit to the city in 1889. To celebrate King Umberto I and Queen Margherita's visit, Raffaele Esposito created a pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella and basil, echoing the red, white and green on the flag belonging to the newly re-united Italy. The pizza was then named after the Queen.



Naples is renowned for its 'fast food' with its roots in *cucina povera*. You will find no shortage of **street food** as you explore the city, such as freshly cooked focaccia, crispy fried vegetables, and pall' 'e ris (rice balls) - all delicious snacks to enjoy on the move.





Subscribe to *Italia!* magazine today and save money every issue!

This issue's exciting offer is an amazing opportunity to save money on your favourite magazine! At just £4.50 per issue (every two months) by Direct Debit, you'll be saving 28 per cent on the full price of each issue – delivered right to your door – plus 10 per cent off all Italia! back issues and Italia! Guides. For more information and how to subscribe, details are on p30, or turn to p73 for United States info.



You tell us...









It's time to think about holidays on Italian shores - we asked our Facebook friends about their favourite beaches in Italy...

 La Pelosa and Tuerredda beaches, which are both in Sardegna.

Gunilla Marianne Ålbrink



Forte dei Marmi is a seaside town in Tuscany that is well known for its beaches. The Pontile is a long pier offering views of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the city, which features the Apuan Alps in the background. I've been there many times in September while staying in Lucca. I live in New Jersey, USA, which has fabulous ocean beaches, so we know a great beach when we see it.

Sally Macdonald Teschon

- I would recommend Cattolica in Emilia-Romagna, just because it's close to so many lovely places. Gilly Erica
- Send us a letter using the address on page 6
- 🚯 Join us on Facebook, search for Italia! magazine
- 💟 Find us on Twitter at @ItaliaMag
- Find us on Instagram at @italia_magazine





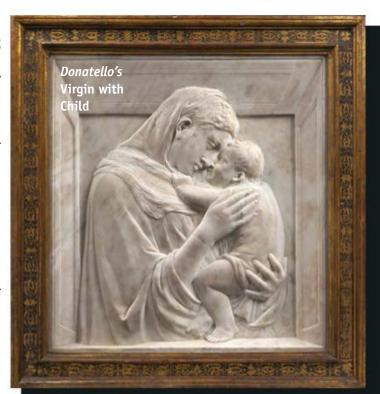
Dolci should never be ignored when in Naples. Gelato is, of course, a popular choice, with so many tempting flavours to choose from. Sfogliatella is a speciality cake of the city, filled with ricotta and candied fruit, and scented with cinnamon. It is available in different forms, all of which you should try!

Coffee is taken very seriously in this cosmopolitan city. Once well-known for Tits unique way of brewing coffee in a napoletana - a stove-top coffee maker - the specialist coffee-making device is now a thing of the past, but the Neapolitan liking for short, very, very strong coffee is certainly not.

Once you've sampled the food delights that Naples has to offer, finish off your meal in style with a taste of limoncello. The famous lemon liqueur is a speciality of the Amalfi region, from local lemons, water and sugar. It's traditionally served in a frozen glass after dinner.



THIS MONTH News & Views



Donatello comes to Florence

A groundbreaking exhibition celebrating pioneering Renaissance artist Donatello opens at Florence's Palazzo Strozzi and Museo Nazionale del Bargello this year. 'Donatello, The Renaissance' is a major retrospective that brings together the artist's most important masterpieces, exploring his wide-ranging career and looking at his dialogue with - and influence on – his contemporaries and later artists. Donatello was a favourite of the Medicis and one of the artists who set in motion the Florentine Renaissance in the 15th century. This exhibition showcases some 130 sculptures, paintings and drawings, including loans of works from more than 50 of the

world's leading museums, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and Musée du Louvre in Paris. Spread across two venues, the exhibition guides visitors on a journey through Donatello's life in 14 sections, beginning with his early career, moving through the various cities in which he worked, and finally exploring his influence on the artists that followed, and his legacy on the history of art. The exhibition runs from 19 March until 31 July 2022. For more details visit www.palazzostrozzi.org

Online this month

Love pasta? Then you'll love Carmela's Kitchen. A published author and *pastaia* (specialist pasta maker), Carmela's Instagram feed (@carmelaskitchen) is a constantly delicious delight for the senses as she performs creative feats of pasta making with a deftness of touch that's truly inspiring. Her website is crammed with authentic recipes inspired by the seasons and her Italian heritage. www.carmelas-kitchen.com



A robotic welcome

The Palazzo Ducale in Genoa recently saw an unusual new pair of 'employees' take on a role at the attraction. Costantino and Costantina are two 'Pepper' robots whose job is to welcome and entertain visitors at the palace, which today serves as a cultural events centre. The robots were donated by the Costa Crociere Foundation. 'Peppers' are humanoid robots that are designed to interact with people – they can move independently, recognise voices, understand and react to emotions and converse. Positioned near the ticket office, the robots are activated when someone is close by and can choose to interact in English or Italian, whether they're providing information about events, imparting safety rules or involving visitors in games, quizzes and selfies. www.palazzoducale.genova.it

Going up, going down...

↑GOING UP**↑**

 The UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage has added another Italian tradition to its line-up. Truffle



hunting has made it onto the iconic list, after the tartufai first put in their bid to be included eight years ago. Agricultural association Coldiretti welcomed the move, claiming it to be "an important step towards defending a system marked by a special relationship with nature."

 Padua is planning to install the first statue of a woman on its Prato della Valle square, which is currently dominated by 78 statues of male figures, including the likes of Galileo, Tasso and Savonarola. The sculpture will commemorate Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, a 17th-century Venetian noblewoman who was the first female ever to receive a doctoral academic degree.

JGOING DOWN↓

 Sicilian authorities began an investigation after a famous landmark on the island was defaced by vandals. The Scala dei Turchi, a staircase-shaped cliff in Realmonte on the southern coast, is famous for its



distinctive white appearance, but earlier this year its white cliffs were strewn with red iron oxide powder in an act of vandalism that gave the landmark a striking new look. At the time of writing, two suspects have been identified and investigations are on-going.

Read Italia!

On any device, at any time



GET 30 DAYS FREE

When you download the *Italia!* app today!

Just search for Italia! in the App Store and start reading!







THIS MONTH News & Views

EMAIL
US WITH YOUR
QUESTIONS:
italia@anthem.co.uk,
or write to us at our
usual address on
page 6.

BUYING A HOUSE FOR €1

Qwe hear a lot about 'buying a house for a euro' as a way to purchase a property in Italy. Would you be able to tell us more about the scheme, the process and the legalities behind it?

A The so-called "Buy a House at 1 Euro" initiative has been launched by local councils to promote urban regeneration and repopulate increasingly abandoned villages in Italy by bringing new inhabitants as well as business and tourism. The initiative came caught public attention through advertising the sale transfer of properties for the symbolic amount of just one euro. The process begins with an initial first public call for owners of properties who have no use for them, nor current ability to maintain or renovate them – a typical scenario when old properties are inherited. The owners of such properties can apply to participate in this initiative, where they will need to demonstrate that they own the property, give permission to the council to list it in a second public call, and agree to transfer the property to the transferee ("buyer" or "beneficiary") for the symbolic price after the second public call has ended.

In this second public call, the council lists all available properties and the specific terms and conditions for their transfer. Both private citizens and companies can apply to these calls. Any applicant to the second public call is typically expected to (1) submit a renovation plan, which will then need to be started and completed according to time-frames set in the second public call, (2) pay the notarial fees related to the transfer of the property, which must be done by set deadlines, and in some cases (3), sign the *polizza fideiussoria* (buying warranty policy). At this stage, the council plays the role of an intermediary in the process. The transfer of the property will in fact take place between the transferor (original owner) and the transferee (beneficiary).

Exact criteria vary from council to council, with some public calls requiring buyers to live in those properties, while others allow for commercial ventures like bed and breakfasts, while other calls score depending on the type of regeneration plan proposed by the potential buyer. As the scheme has expanded, additional criteria are increasingly coming into play, such as providing a renovation plan with a low environmental impact and consideration of maintaining architectural styles of the local environment. **Laura Protti**, *LEP Law*



Laura Protti is the founder of LEP Law. She is dual-qualified as an Italian *avvocato* and English solicitor, and specialises in assisting British and Italian clients with matters relating to Italian law. Visit her website at **www.leplaw.co.uk**



New football stadium for Milan

Architect Populous has been chosen to design the new football stadium for AC Milan and Inter Milan. The new stadium will replace the existing San Siro and will incorporate a pedestrian-only district dedicated to sport and leisure. The concept, dubbed 'The Cathedral', has taken inspiration from Milan's Duomo and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, and is expected to open in 2027. "Our design envisages the stadium as the most sustainable in Europe and the focal point of a new sports and entertainment district for Milano that will be alive throughout the year," said Declan Sharkey, Senior Principal and General Manager of Populous Italia. "Underpinned by the history and traditions of these two great clubs, it will not only deliver an incredible sporting arena to watch football in but revitalise the whole area to better serve Milano's citizens."



Italia! recommends

Explore Italy with Citalia this summer and visit the new Raphael exhibition in London



STEP OFF THE BEATEN TRACK WITH CITALIA www.citalia.com

Visit the UNESCO site of Sacro Monte di Orta on a hilltop above Lake Orta and stay at lakeside Hotel Giardinetto with stunning views and a private boat landing stage. Book a 7-night B&B stay from £680 per person. The Aeolian Islands (below), are an archipelago of active volcanic



islands also on the UNESCO heritage list. Stay at Therasia Resort Sea & Spa on Vulcano with Citalia with stunning sunsets, sea views from the infinity pool, and vistas over the Aeolian island group. Book a 7-night B&B stay from £1,290 per person. Both holidays include flights from London Gatwick and private airport transfers to your destination.



RAPHAEL EXHIBITION LONDON www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Raphael's life was short, his work prolific, and his legacy immortal. This exhibition from 9 April – 31 July is one of the first ever to explore his entire career. On show are paintings and drawings as well as architecture, poetry, and design for sculpture, tapestry and prints.

Raphael's Saint John the Baptist Preaching, 1505, oil on poplar. © The National Gallery, London

Speak Italian? Speak it better!

Now you can improve or maintain your Italian with Tutto italiano, the bi-monthly audio magazine for people who love Italy and the Italian language.

Lively, relevant, entertaining

Published six times a year by an experienced team in Rome, Tutto italiano not only helps you improve your fluency, it also helps you understand what it is to be Italian. The glossy magazine is packed full of lively articles and the latest news covering the whole of Italy. There are regular features on a range of topics including travel, business, the arts, cinema, politics, sport, cucina italiana, popular culture, plus profiles on leading personalities and issues making the news.

Keep your Italian up to date

Alongside each article in Italian, key words and phrases are glossed into English. Every feature is graded for difficulty so you can assess your progress. Each article will keep you up to date with idiomatic expressions as well as practical information.

Understand Italian as it's really spoken

The accompanying MP3 audio download or audio CD is the perfect tool for improving listening comprehension and building confidence in speaking Italian. Put together by a team of professional narrators, each 60-minutes of audio provides well-paced readings of the key articles from the magazine. The audio will enable you to improve significantly your ability

to understand Italian as it's really spoken.

Michel Thomas

VOCABULARY



Order Tutto italiano TODAY by calling FREE on 0800 141 2210 in the UK (or +44 117 927 2236 overseas), or visit our website at www.languages-direct.com/ITAL226 and as an exclusive offer to ITALIA! Magazine readers you will get £10 off the regular price and receive a copy of the best-selling Michel Thomas Italian Vocabulary Course, worth £60, for FREE!





- Speak Italian with confidence by learning Italian as it's really spoken
- improve your vocabulary and listening comprehension
- improve your cultural IQ
- enjoy lively, relevant and up-to-date content
- take advantage of on-going, portable and flexible learning.

Subscribe Today!

Sì Please send me one year's subscription (six issues) Magazine+MP3 OR Magazine+CD for £89 (normal price £99) to *Tutto italiano* Audio Magazine + receive a copy of the best-selling Michel Thomas Italian Vocabulary Course, worth £60, for FREE! **Cheque:** cheque enclosed for £89 payable to Languages Direct Or Card: Please charge my credit card for the sum of £89 only: ____ Card CVV Code: _____ Last Name __ Country ____

_____Email

Please send your completed order form together with payment to: Languages Direct, FREEPOST RSKB-KSKR-LYLU, Bristol, BS1 6UX Outside UK: Languages Direct, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol, BS1 6UX, United Kingdom

100% money-back guarantee

If for any reason *Tutto italiano* is not for you, just let us know within 60 days, and we'll refund your subscription in FULL, and you can keep your first issue. If at any time later you decide to cancel, we'll refund you the cost of any unmailed issues.

To see our full range of excellent language learning materials, including audio magazines for French and Spanish learners, visit: www.languages-direct.com







Send us your favourite Italian travel photos, and each month the best photo wins a bottle of **Villa Sandi Il Fresco Prosecco** and exclusive bottle stopper!*

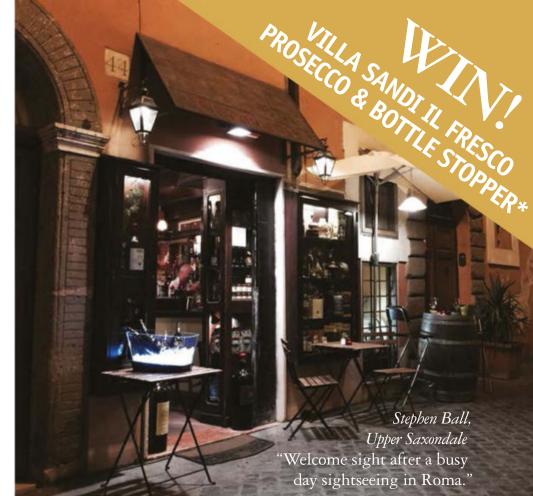




"How wonderful to read October's article on Hidden Naples and the Duomo di San Gennaro. It brought tears to my eyes. I attach a photo outside the Duomo taken 60 years ago at my First Holy Communion. My mother and *nonna* pictured with me. I returned a few years ago and stood there again but alone."







🔰 Tom and Julie Pinckheard, Bath

"During a holiday in Florence with my wife I noticed a lot of modern street art road signs. I have attached a few photos of them but there are many more to be discovered. Seeing some French tourists who were also photographing one of the signs, I learned that they were produced by Clet Abraham, a French artist who lives in Florence. His studio is on the corner of the Via del Olmo."



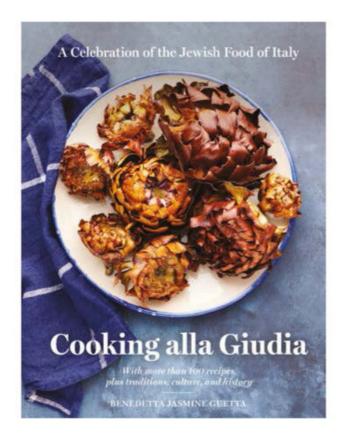


HOW TO SEND YOUR PHOTOS Please email large, high-resolution (300dpi) jpegs of your photos of Italy to italia@anthem.co.uk or send prints to 'Reader Photo Competition' at the address given on page 6. Please include a brief photo description, plus your name, delivery address and a phone number (for our couriers). You must be over 18 to enter. If you don't wish to receive details of future offers and promotions from Anthem Publishing, Villa Sandi or Bellavita, please state 'NO INFO' on your entry.

READER OFFER London-based Bellavita specialises in premium-quality Italian food and wines, delivered from Italy right to your door. *Italia!* readers get a 10 per cent discount on Villa Sandi wines and all other products online at **www.bellavitashop.co.uk** until 31 January 2023 by entering the code 'italia10' at the checkout.

Entry terms: Any photos you submit must be your own work and you must have the right to send them for inclusion on this page. By sending your entry, you are confirming that *Italia!*'s use of your photo(s) will not constitute infringement of any rights, and confirming that you are over 18.

THIS MONTH In Print



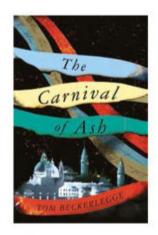
Cooking alla Giudia

Benedetta Jasmine Guetta, Artisan/Workman Publishing, £30.00 (hardback)
While we may be familiar with the food of the Jewish communities of northern and eastern Europe, and some of us may even be familiar with the classic Italian deep-fried artichokes – a Roman Jewish speciality, in fact – the vibrant and delicious food of the Jewish Italian communities remains relatively unknown. Benedetta Jasmine Guetta's new book provides a fascinating exploration of Jewish Italian culinary traditions in the context

of the history of Jewish people in Italy, from Roman times, through the turbulent middle ages, to today. The culinary traditions of this small and dwindling community are at risk of being forgotten, so *Cooking alla Giudia* is an important cultural and culinary document.

Many of the recipes reflect their origins in the Middle East, north Africa and Spain. In sections covering soups, rice and pasta, fish, poultry and meat, contorni, dolci and bread, we see how the flavours and ingredients of the Jewish population influenced local tastes (such as the Venetian classic sarde in saor), and vice versa: resourceful Jewish cooks found ways to create kosher versions of Italian favourites such as prosciutto (made from goose - recipe included!) and lasagne, using a béchamel made with broth, not milk, to comply with Jewish dietary law. The delicious dishes provide much inspiration for those who wish to cook meals which, as the author notes, call for sharing with family and friends around the table, in the best traditions of Jewish and Italian cooking.



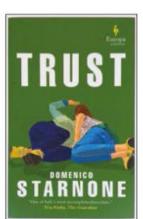


The Carnival of Ash

Tom Beckerlegge, Solaris, £16.99 (hardback) Cadenza, the City of Words, is run by poets and home to Italy's rarest libraries, whose soaring towers dominate the city

skyline. Carlo Mazzoni, a young wordsmith, arrives at the city gates intent on making his name, as the bells ring out with the news of the death of the city's poet-leader. Instead, he finds himself embroiled in the intrigues of a city in turmoil, the looming prospect of war with rival Venice ever-present.

Carnival of Ash, Tom Beckerlegge's first novel for adults, skilfully weaves together the tales of several characters who appear in each other's stories in the richly imaginative setting of Renaissance Italy, to create an complex web of dark and engaging story-telling.



Trust

Domenico Starnone, Europa Editions, £12.99 (paperback) Naples-born Domenico Starnone is a journalist, screenwriter and author of 14 novels as well as works of non-fiction. His novel *Ties* (also published by Europa)

was a *Sunday Times* and *New York Times* choice for book of the year in 2017. The complexities of human relationships is not an original theme for a novel, but from the start, the author pulls us into his narrative as two lovers, Pietro and Teresa, confess to one another a deep, dark

My favourite place in Italy

Cheese! Festival, Bra



CHRIS ALLSOP, JOURNALIST AND ITALIA! CONTRIBUTOR

Beneath the blue skies of September in Piedmont, the world's finest (and weirdest) artisan cheeses set up along the baroque streets of Bra. Throw in free-flowing local Arneis wine, pairing classes, and much, much more, and you've a stupendous weekend of Italian flavour.



secret. Their relationship breaks up shortly afterwards, but the 'dirt' they both have on each other creates a suspenseful tension that determines their destinies through life's twists and turns. As the one with a more public persona, Pietro has the most to lose, and thanks to this secret exchange of information he remains haunted by Teresa and the power she holds over him, trusting her throughout his life to keep his secret. The final pages bring their journey to an unanticipated yet hugely satisfying outcome.

ITALY

Road Trips Italy

DK Eyewitness, £14.99, (paperback) If you're planning a road trip through Italy, you'll want to savour every moment, and this new book from DK Eyewitness is just the quide to help you. Packed with detailed

itineraries and plenty of helpful directions – as well as a handy section on the rules of road in Italy, insurance, car hire and personal security. Take the long way round with this curated choice of 24 carefully planned routes.

There's an adventure for everyone here: from the dramatic landscapes of the Valle d'Aosta mountains and the glories of the northern lakes to the scenic splendours of Tuscany and the shimmering emerald coasts of Sardinia. Each trip includes local beauty spots and cultural highlights, advice on the best time to visit, plus accommodation, restaurants and shopping tips. There are also guided walks when you want to stop off and stretch your legs, and delightful detours when you fancy spending a little more time getting to know an area better. Beautifully presented with colour photography, it invites you to travel with confidence.





THIS MONTH



Florence's **SCOPPIO DEL CARRO** (Explosion of the Cart) is held on Easter Sunday but isn't your typical Easter celebration. White oxen haul a 17th-century cart to the Piazza del Duomo, escorted by participants dressed in 15th-century garb. The cart is then loaded up with fireworks, which are ignited after Easter Mass, lighting up the sky in a fantastic display.

17 April

First celebrated in 1950, LA SAGRA DEL CARCIOFO ROMANESCO (Romanesco Artichoke Festival) was launched in Lazio's Ladispoli to celebrate this tasty local ingredient. If you're in the town around the time of the festival you'll find

restaurants offering artichoke-based menus (from starters to desserts!) as well as plenty more food and festivities. As with many Italian festivals, the event closes with an impressive fireworks display.

22-24 April (TBC), www.prolocoladispoli.it

Every May the town of Cocullo in Abruzzo plays host to the **FESTA DEI SERPARI** – also known as the Festival of the Snake Catchers. This unique event has pagan origins but today it also has a Christian connection, honouring the town's patron saint, San Domenico. The most

extraordinary part of the festival sees a wooden statue of the saint draped in dozens of snakes and paraded through town.

1 May, www.comune.cocullo.aq.it

Visit Accettura in Basilicata for MAGGIO DI ACCETTURA, a fourday pagan tree festival in which an oak tree and holly tree are cut from the local woods and transported to the town, where they are 'married' to one another. The oak stands for the groom (il maggio) and the holly for the bride (la cima) in a symbolic wedding ceremony which is a representation of the union of the town.

26-29 May

The FESTA DEL GRILLO (Cricket Festival) in Florence dates back to the 19th century and celebrates these noisy insects, which are seen as bringing good luck. The event takes place in the city's Cascine Park, where 'lucky' crickets in cages are sold (today the crickets are artificial) and additional festivities include food stalls and live music.

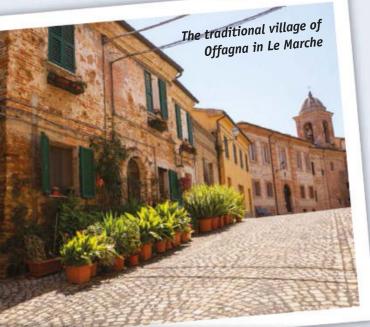
29 May 🚻



lmage © iStock

lmage © iStock

Build your future in the Italian Marche The traditional village of Offgang in Le Marche The traditional village of Italian Marche



Riviera del Conero is a national park in the province of Ancona

ITS ITALY is leading a pioneering group giving life back to local communities in Italy, restoring ancient properties, facilitating investments in local businesses and supporting the local circular economy

rom the stunning hilltops of the Apennines to villages full of history and culinary traditions, the Marche region is an authentic Italian gem. After visiting the rolling countryside of Le Marche, many start daydreaming about buying a property or a business and building a new life in a place surrounded by nature and history.

Yet, in the past, daunting bureaucracy, dealing in a different language and high costs would have crushed any plan of moving to Italy. ITS ITALY has turned the tables, however, with an innovative solution to help foreigners interested in Italian properties as well as local communities affected by depopulation.

The London-based start-up offers a virtually stress-free process to find and buy Italian property to customise with guaranteed cost and timescales. On its platform, interested buyers can choose, vet and configure properties to their individual needs. ITS ITALY then takes care of all the administrative procedures and local Italian contractors, while offering English speaking lawyers and accountants to certify the entire process.

SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

ITS ITALY does not only focus on the restoration of ancient buildings, however. This Italian-led company facilitates buying properties in Italy for foreigners and works closely with the local communities to help them regenerate their social fabric.

ITS ITALY is, therefore, neither an estate agency, nor a developer, nor a consultancy service company. Rather, ITS ITALY is a lifestyle company that collaborates with Italian municipalities to select and restore properties in order to help entire communities.

Instead of building new houses, ITS ITALY offers 'ready-to-use' renovation plans and historical buildings (not new-build) with all the commodities of modern homes but without any hidden surprises in terms of costs or timescales. Every property is selected in collaboration with the municipality and is at the heart of broader recovery plans for the entire village. For this reason, every building is restored with its original materials to preserve the property's portfolio heritage. The company also helps to build financial plans to make these properties sustainable.



Although ITS ITALY's project is perfect for people looking to move to Italy, the company also manages the properties and rents them out, to guarantee their members a passive income when they are not using them. Thanks to the interest of thousands of subscribers worldwide, ITS ITALY is now leading the regeneration of ancient Italian villages in some of the most beautiful and culturally rich locations in the country. Just one year on from its creation, ITS ITALY now covers more than fifty small villages, such as the beautiful villages of Montedinove and Offagna, both in the Marche region, famous for its mountains and hills.

Situated on the highest peak of the Marche hills, Montedinove offers a stunning view sweeping over the Adriatic coast all the way to the Sibillini Mountains, from Monte Conero to the Gran Sasso d'Italia. Here ITS ITALY will soon have a beautiful property which will then be split into three units. Other properties are also currently selected.

At that point, Montedinove will also join the project of ITS Lending, the first crowdfunding platform dedicated to restoring properties in ancient Italian villages. Founded by ITS ITALY at the end of 2021, ITS Lending has already successfully closed three deals and will soon scale up to four or five deals to choose from each month.

LOCAL COLLABORATION

Soon, the platform will also open a crowdfunding line dedicated to supporting commercial and artisanal businesses in all these villages. All the properties presented on ITS Lending have been carefully chosen by ITS ITALY and have already been booked by a final buyer, making the

process more secure for investors. Both ITS ITALY and ITS Lending aim create concrete opportunities for everyone to participate in the regeneration of Italian villages, while also supporting the existing local economy.

In order to help the municipalities, ITS ITALY is also dedicated to helping its members integrate fully within the local communities. The successful collaboration between locals, businesses and 'new residents' favoured by ITS ITALY is already paying off, and new initiatives are expected to completely change the economic profiles of many villages, such as Offagna. An historic village with a medieval fortress near the Conero Rivera located in a panoramic setting, Offagna is now becoming a digital village and an open-air laboratory of the local circular economy.

Offagna will be one of the first villages benefitting from a cashback card to be invested in the territory. The card was created to boost the circular economy on the territory, and further strengthens the union between residents and visitors.

The proceeds from the cashback will go to cardholders as well as to social projects to promote the area – for example, to initiate village decorating projects, finance scholarships for young people, or to create a fund for new local start-ups, who will be able to use the co-working space to start their own business.

Collaborating closely with the municipalities on their recovery projects, ITS ITALY is now leading the regeneration of ancient Italian villages while also making the dreams of thousands of foreigners come true. Moreover, the company offers the possibility of getting involved in entrepreneurial projects



in the local area as the project goes beyond promoting rural villages for just tourism. ITS ITALY allows everybody to become an integral and active part of the communities. As the company's motto says: "Don't just visit, belong!"

Most importantly, ITS ITALY's project aims to trigger and sustain a virtuous cycle between urban regeneration and investment with a high social impact. This way, the company is making these villages far more attractive for future generations and young families by persuading them not to move away.

ITS ITALY offers more than properties in ancient Italian hamlets: it offers the possibility of actively contributing to the renovation of these traditional villages and preserving thousands of years of precious historical heritage.

Join these revolutionary projects at www.itsfor.it and www.itslending.it

FIND OUT MORE

ITSITALY www.itsfor.it



THIS MONTH

From **Easter cakes to travel inspiration**, take a look at our bumper pick of Italian gifts and ideas!



WAYS OF TRAVELLING SO CARDS TO SHIFT YOUR PERSPECTIVE

≺TRAVEL DEEPER

Dynamic 'Ways of Travelling' prompt-cards to expand your horizons! £16.99, www. laurenceking.com

✓ MAPPED OUT
Rome Blue River
cityscape 3D map,
£275, www.chisel
andmouse.com

SWEET DREAMS Organic silk eye mask,

anic silk eye mask, £30, www.john lewis.com

≺ AL FRESCO

Garden table from the Wild collection by Fast, £770, www.gomodern.co.uk



Ortigia orange blossom roll-on perfume, £18 for 10ml, www. heavenlyhomesandgardens.co.uk



⋖WINGSOF A DOVE

Dolce & Gabbana and Fiasconaro Colomba cake for Easter, £34.99, www.souschef .co.uk



ART OF GLASS >

Millefiori Murano glass carafe, £115, www.rebecca udall.com





VIEWPOINT

La chiesa della **Nostra Signora di Lourdes** crowns the skyline of the city of Verona, a religious site where until recently there stood a military fort

Verona's Church of Our Lady of Lourdes represents a 20th-century reconfiguration of a 19th-century military building, il Forte San Leonardo. This fortified structure had been built as part of the city's defensive system after the days of the Napoleonic wars but before the Risorgimento, at a time when Verona was under the rule of the Austrians. It was constructed to protect what was then a vulnerable frontier city in a great but increasingly weak Habsburg Empire. In 1952, just seventy years ago, it began its transformation into the ecclesiastical building we see today, with its distinctive dome the most noticeable architectural modification.



a your fingertips

Dreaming of Italy? **Rachael Martin** looks at how you can bring the country closer to you with online experiences, from live-streamed art history and city tours to cookery classes, wine tastings and more

here's no doubt that the past two years have clipped our wings somewhat – and while travel appears to be opening up again, for many, Italy is still out of reach, just for now... One pandemic positive, however, has been the expansion of easy online communication. This holds the key to unlocking a wealth of Italian experiences and bringing them right into your home. Whatever your passion, the opportunities to immerse yourself are right there at your fingertips. Italy is just a click away...



Take a virtual walk through Italy's cities

VENICE

Registered guide Luisella Romeo was born and raised in Venice, and has been sharing her city with visitors for over twenty years. She knows that visiting a city is not just about art and culture but also experiencing those everyday details. Tours include districts such as Cannaregio and the Jewish ghetto or Giudecca, iconic Venetian museums, and



four tours about glass, gondolas, silk and masks.

She also holds webinars. Subjects range from the landscape, birds and boats of the Venetian lagoon to the opera and music houses of the 18th century – or find out

how Venice dealt with the plague that kept returning to the city over the years. Prices start at €100 per class (individuals and groups). www.seevenice.it

Also see Luisella's video 'Live Venice Virtual Tours with Luisella Romeo' on YouTube.

TUSCANY

Explore many of Tuscany's favourite destinations with Anna Piperato,

an experienced tour guide based in Siena, including a highly informative virtual walking tour of Pisa and its famous tower. The tour costs just €15 to download. Anna also has plenty of other pre-recorded tours on her website, and you can sign up there for one of her forthcoming live Zoom walking tours.

www.sienaitalytours.com

ROME

Agnes
Crawford
has been
showing
the secrets
and the
splendours
of Rome to
Englishspeaking
visitors for



thirteen years. The architectural historian's online talks and live-streamed walking tours cover all things Roman in glorious detail. Book yourself a place at a talk for €15. www.understandingrome.com

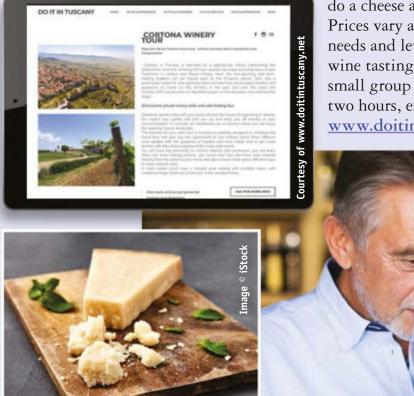


Get your friends together and enjoy an evening of wine and cheese tasting

Taste wine & cheese

'Do it in Tuscany', which is based in Cortona, offers tailor-made virtual wine tastings. Wine is sent straight to your home for the session – or indications are given on where to buy it – and sessions involve learning about the area and the wine produced there, followed by the tasting itself. There's also a cheese tasting tour, as Valdichiana, the area where Cortona is situated, and nearby Val D'Orcia are both famous for their *pecorino* cheese. Visit a *caseificio*, where cheese is made, via live streaming, and learn about the process, and then take part in a guided home tasting. Cheeses include *pecorino fresco*, *semi-fresco* and *stagionato* (mature). If you want the

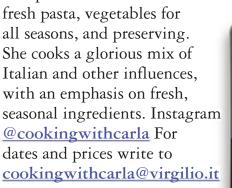
full experience, you can also do a cheese and wine tasting. Prices vary according to client needs and level, but a basic wine tasting session for a small group is from €180 for two hours, excluding wine. www.doitintuscany.net



Enjoy a cookery class

Take an online cookery class with Carla Tomasi, also known as the 'Vegetable Whisperer in Rome'. Carla was born and brought up in Rome, got on a plane to London when she was eighteen and spent the 1980s and 1990s working in restaurants, including her own. When she first arrived, Italian food involved readymade dishes of pasta all lined up and warmed up in a microwave. By the time she left in 1998 and returned to Rome, Italian food had made its mark on London and internationally.

Carla now lives in Ostia Antica with her cats and her splendid vegetable garden. She brings a wealth of experience to her online courses, which include





Carla Tomasi is renowned for her practical, fuss-free approach to seasonal Italian cooking with delicious results everyone can achieve

Immerse yourself in art

Art History in Focus was founded by art historian and lecturer Siân Walters and has an impressive cultural programme. Its Cultural Travels from Home programme is pioneering in its field and has gained online access to prestigious museums and galleries such as Florence's Medici Palace, the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi and the Brera Gallery in Milan. The spring programme includes a walking tour of Rome and an eight-week Virtual Rome course made up of a series of lectures, walking tours and livestream museum visits, including exclusive guided tours of the Villa Farnesina and Palazzo Colonna.

There will also be a livestream tour of the Doges'
Palace in Venice, which was both home to the Doges

— as the Dukes were known in the Venetian dialect —
and the seat of the Venetian government during the
thousand years of the Republic of Venice. Private tours,
courses and lectures can also be arranged. Prices start at
€100 per class. www.arthistoryinfocus.com



Follow a virtual tour around Milan cathedral in Italian to practise your language skills

TEEMILANO

5 MOTIVI PER VISITARE

Learn Italian

Now could be the time to study Italian and improve your grammar and vocabulary. Scuola Leonardo da Vinci (www.scuolaleonardo.com) offers various courses for

every level. Learn Italian online in individual or group classes, or use the Italian you have to learn about fashion, literature, current affairs and art. Courses are tailored to your level and interest.

DuoLingo is a free app that offers plenty of practice from beginner level upwards, www.uoen.edu/openlearn/languages.

Another great way to practise your Italian is to read Italian online. www.yesmilano.it is Milan's official tourist site. Take a virtual tour around the city's cathedral at www.duomomilano.it.

www.romaturismo.it also has plenty to read, while www.visitnaples.eu has a section on Neapolitanity with fascinating stories of the city. www.borghipiu belliditalia.it explores Italy's most beautiful villages and towns, while www.pompei.it also includes virtual reconstructions of buildings.

Practise your Italian reading comprehension with our bilingual Gazzetta feature – turn to page 42



The 14th-century Venetian palazzo Ca' Sagredo is one of the cultural highlights from the Art History in Focus virtual tours

Films to watch

'Roma Città Aperta' (Roberto Rossellini, 1946) This neorealist film of Rome during the second world war tells the story of Resistance leader Giorgio Manfredi.

'Bicycle Thieves' (Vittorio de Sica, 1948) Another important neorealist film set in post-war Rome.

'Roman Holiday' (William Wyler, 1953) Audrey Hepburn plays a princess who takes off with Gregory Peck on a Vespa. A classic, with 1950s Rome as its backdrop.



'La Dolce Vita' (Federico Fellini, 1960)

This iconic and much-lauded film explores Roman high society through the eyes of gossip column journalist Marcello Rubini.

'The Fall of the Roman Empire'

(Anthony Mann, 1964)

An all-star extravaganza from the days when Rome was known as Hollywood on the Tiber, this is a lavish production.

'Il Postino' (1994)

Chilean poet Paolo Neruda exiles in a southern Italian village and becomes friends with the local postman.

'I am Love'

(Luca Guadagnino, 2009) Tilda Swinton plays a wealthy Milanese industrialist's wife who has an affair with a chef.

'Franca: Chaos and Creation'

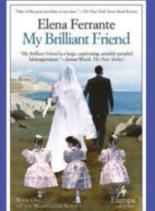
(Francesco Carrozzini, 2016)

Francesco Carrozzini made this documentary about his mother, legendary *Vogue Italia* editor Franca Sozzani.

'Call Me By Your Name' (Luca Guadagnino, 2017) Based on the book by André Aciman, this is the story of two young men who fall in love one hot, sultry summer.

The Life Ahead' (Edoardo Ponti, 2020)
Sophia Loren plays a former sex worker who takes in an orphaned 12-year-old Senegalese boy.

Your reading list



'My Brilliant Friend'

This book by Elena Ferrante is the first of her Neapolitan novels.

'A Room with a View'

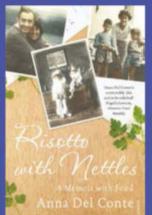
Read E M Forster's captivating tale set in Florence, then watch the film.

'Inspector Montalbano'

Andrea Camilleri's detective series will whisk you off to Sicily.

'Eat, Pray, Love'

Elizabeth Gilbert went to Rome and ate. And who wouldn't?



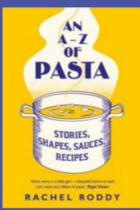
'Risotto with Nettles'

Anna del Conte's autobiography starts with the story of her childhood in Milan in the middle of what is now the Golden Quad, Milan's exclusive fashion district.

'Under the Tuscan Sun'

Frances Mayes' book made Cortona famous, while The Genius of a Place is Sarah Marder and Old Creative Farm's

documentary which examined the effects of tourism on the town. www.thegeniusofaplace.com



'An A-Z of Pasta'

Rachel Roddy's recipe book is exactly what you need in your kitchen to satisfy those pasta cravings. Delve into her repertoire of authentic recipes celebrating Italy's most famous staple. And don't forget, you'll find a wealth of tasty Italian recipes on our website at www.italytravelandlife.com



Virtual cycling

Ever dreamed of doing a cycling tour around Italy? Or

taking part in your very own Giro d'Italia? Pedalitaly

offers both virtual races and virtual tours from home to

share with others from all over the world. Take part in

Get on your bike and travel around Italy virtually

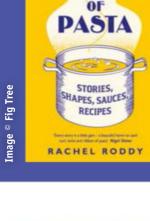


a virtual race, streamed live on Facebook and Twitch, with commentary from English and Italian speaking commentators for that Giro d'Italia experience. As you cycle, watch video clips about the sports, history, arts, landscapes, culture and food and wine of the lands you visit, as well as live interviews with participants.

Alternatively, choose a social ride or virtual tour with tour leaders that tell you about the places you pass through. Choose from virtual tours around areas of the country that include Trentino, Veneto, Sardinia, Tuscany and the Cinque Terre. www.pedalitaly.com

Cycling lovers may also enjoy the official Giro d'Italia site at www.giroditalia.it









Get into the mood

To create a truly Italian ambience, why not evoke memories of *aperitivo* hour and the much-loved spritz? Dating back to Venice at the beginning of the 19th century, the story goes that Austro-Hungarian soldiers asked the locals to dilute the local wine with sparkling water, hence *Spritz*, *Spritzen* in German. It wasn't until later that bitter was then added. For a Venetian spritz, mix three equal parts of white sparkling wine, Select bitter and soda water. Alternatively, it's 6cl of prosecco, 4cl of Aperol and a spritz of soda water – over ice!

The Negroni – which has enjoyed a renaissance recently – brings together gin, Vermouth and Campari in equal parts (or 30ml of each). Serve with a slice of orange. The famous Negroni Sbagliato (or 'wrong

Negroni') comes from Bar Basso in Milan, when in 1972 owner Mirko Stocchetto 'accidentally' made a Negroni with *spumante* instead of gin, and became a legend.



Aperitivo playlist Here's a list of some of the most well-loved Italian songs to accompany your *aperitivo*...

'Incontro' Francesco Guccini; 'Parole Parole' Mina; 'Sally' Vasco Rossi; 'Almento tu nell'universo' Mia Martini; 'Per te' Jovanotti; 'Sotto il segno dei pesci' Antonello Venditti; 'Il mio canto libero' Lucio Battisti; 'Napule è' Pino Daniele; 'Il Cielo in una stanza' Gino Paoli; 'Quelle che le donne non dicono' Fiorella Mannoia; 'It's wonderful' Paolo Conte; 'La Bambola' Patty Pravo.

Find a fresh perspective on the familiar through the work of Italian photographers

Italy through a lens

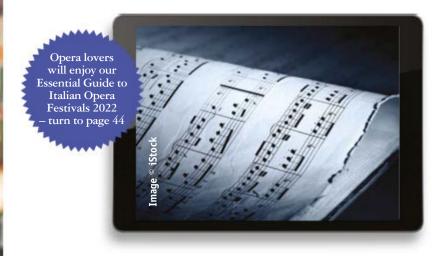
Exploring Italy through someone else's eyes leads you off well-travelled paths and away from stereotypes. Take

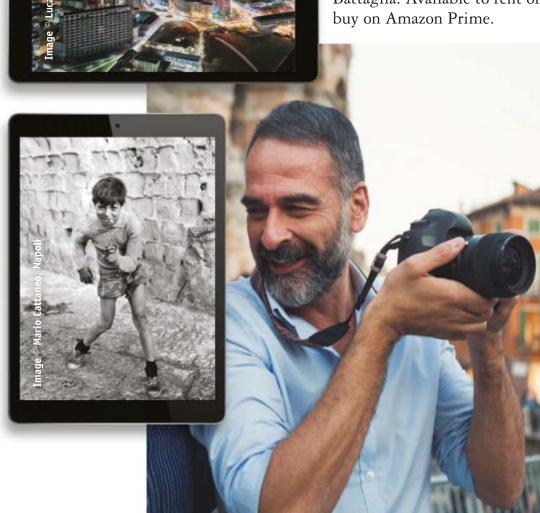
a look at Mufoco Museum of Contemporary Photography's digital archives (www.mufoco.it), and also for Kim Longinotto's documentary Shooting the Mafia about Sicilian photographer Letizia Battaglia. Available to rent or buy on Amazon Prime.



Opera & classical music

ITsART offers arts and culture with operas and classical concerts from Italy's most prestigious theatres, available as free to watch or for rental. A lot of the films and documentaries are in Italian, which is great for practising your Italian. If you don't understand at first, don't be put off. We've all been there! www.itsart.tv





SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Hes. I'd like to subscribe to Italia!

☐ UK £4.50 per issue (every 2 months) by Direct Debit – saving 28%

Please complete the form below

YOUR DETAILS

IITLE	Forename	Surname
Address		
		Postcode
Country		
Email*		
Telephone	*	
		so that Anthem Publishing Ltd can keep you informed ay unsubscribe from these messages at any time.
offers and indicate h	occasionally request	to keep you up to date with news, events, special t feedback from you. Please tick the relevant boxes to be contacted. You can choose more than one. MS No thanks
Publishing		o receiving email communications from Anthem be using the link in any email you receive and or opt ng.com/privacy
INSTRU	CTION TO YOUR BA	NK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY DIRECT DEBIT
		Originator's Identification Number

INSTRUCTION TO TOOK DAME ON DOLLDING SOCIETY TO TAIL DIRECT DEDI				
1 Name of your Bank or Building Society Originator's Ide 8 3	entification Number 7 1 8 1 PREST			
2 Name of account holder(s)				
3 Branch sort code				
4 Account number				
5 Instruction to your Bank/Building Society Please pay Anthem Publishing Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Anthem Publishing and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.				
Signature(s)	Date			
DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE Direct Debit is only available in the LIK. If you're not entirely satisfied with	th <i>Italial</i> at any time during			



Send your completed form to FREEPOST ANTHEM PUBLISHING (Yes, it's that simple! No address or stamp required. UK only.)

your subscription, you can cancel it and receive a refund for any unmailed copies.

OFFER CODE: PAGE22

Terms and conditions

The saving is calculated from the UK cover price, and is only available to UK subscribers paying by Direct Debit, PayPal or continuous card payment. We have offers for our overseas subscribers too – head to shop.italiamagazine.co.uk to learn more. There are 6 issues of Italia! published in a year and you can choose your start issue as the issue on sale now, or an unpublished issue in the future. For all terms and conditions, please visit shop.italiamagazine.co.uk/terms.

TALA!



If you love Italy as much as we do here at Italia!, this fantastic subscription offer is the one for you!

Whether you feel comfortable visiting Italy in person yet or not, Italia! magazine will always deliver Italy right to your home.

Every issue is packed with travel inspiration, stunning photography, news, reviews, recipes and much more. You can now pay for your favourite magazine issue by issue, when you subscribe using simple and convenient Direct Debit. This way, you'll pay 28 per cent less than if you pick your issue up in the shops!

To take advantage of this amazing moneysaving offer, we've made it easy - just fill in the form on the left, give us a call or head to our website. Or simply scan the handy QR code below! Subscribe today and become one of the thousands of people who enjoy Italia! magazine every issue.

Amanda Robinson Editor







Unst use the camera on your phone to sean this QR code, and easily subscribe with this special offer now!

Your subscription offer

- Italia! magazine delivered direct to your home so you never miss an issue
- Catch up on any back issue or special for less using your 10% discount in the Italia! shop
- Receive travel tips, property advice, and delicious recipes straight to your inbox with our fortnightly email newsletter
- Enjoy peace of mind with carbon-neutral paper and 100% recyclable packaging



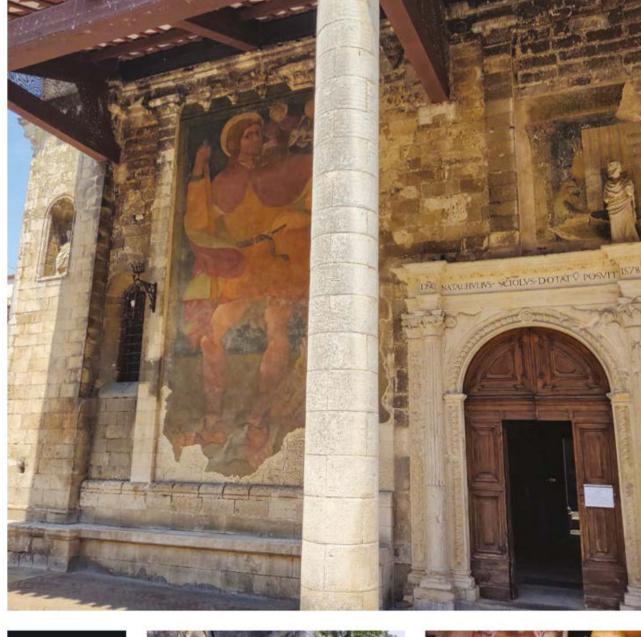
The state of the s

italytravelandlife.com/PAGE22

+44 (0)1371 853 609 Offer code PAGE22 COMPLETE
THE FORM
OPPOSITE AND
SEND FREEPOST







Clockwise from top left:

Making maccheroni alla chitarra at Agriturismo Pietrantica in Decontra

The Collegiate Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Guardiagrele

Hiring a car will enable you to see scenery like this

The hermitage of Santo Spirito a Majella

Encounters on the road

The fairytale mountain village of Pretoro

Fara San Martino, where much of the pasta you eat actually comes from

Filippo Scioli in his workshop in Guardiagrele

The Holy Stair at Santo Spirito a Majella

Local dairy products









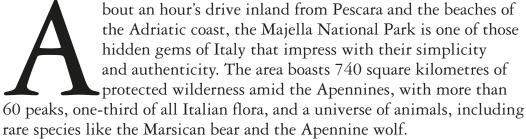




48 HOURS IN...

Majella

Officially listed in the UNESCO Geopark network, Majella in Abruzzo is a dream for nature lovers, as **Val Nicastro** discovers



Locals call Majella their 'Mother Mountain' and believe its name derives from the goddess Maia. According to the legend, the mountain is Maia's final resting place, where she collapsed after searching for endemic medicinal herbs in the snow to save her son Mercury, who had been badly injured in a battle. The Majella Park is a land of staggering views, fascinating folk tales, delicacies you'll rarely find elsewhere, and mountain villages where everyone knows everyone. And with a priceless heritage of art and culture, there's a lot to explore in this corner of wild and untouched beauty.



My visit started in Fara San Martino, a pretty hamlet near the Verde River. Several pasta brands (including De Cecco) chose it as the base for their factories because its excellent mountain waters make it the perfect place for pasta making. The village also houses a few natural wonders, including







DISCOVER ITALIA!

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

HIKE THE SPIRITUAL TRAIL 1

The Majella National Park offers visitors a vast network of fantastic hiking routes, including the fascinating Spiritual Trail, which runs for about 73km between the little village of Serramonacesca and the historic town of Sulmona. The path connects all the major places of worship that are peppered across the area and its silent woods, promising a fantastic adventure filled with natural wonders and deep spirituality.

WOLF ENCOUNTERS IN PRETORO 2

The wolves are the iconic symbol of the Majella National Park and the Wolf Wildlife Area in Pretoro gives you the unique opportunity to observe these fascinating animals without being at all intrusive, and also without being in any danger yourself! Get in touch with Il Grande Faggio (info@) ilgrandefaggio.it) to learn more about wolf preservation and to book a guided tour.

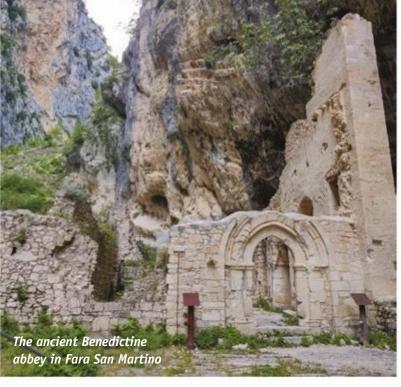
ARTISANAL SHOPPING IN GUARDIAGRELE 3

Guardiagrele, one of Italy's most beautiful villages, is particularly renowned in the area not just for its attractiveness but also for its long-standing tradition of making excellent handicraft products, which makes this the perfect place to shop for unusual souvenirs of your visit. In August, the village also hosts the famous Market Fair of Abruzzese Craftswork.

THE WORLD CAPITAL OF PASTA 4

It is said that the pure waters of the Rio Verde, the Green River, are the secret ingredient behind the excellent pasta that is produced in Fara San Martino, a delightful village framed by the spectacular mountains of the Majella Park. Many iconic pasta factories are based here and the village's Pasta Festival in August is a worthy celebration of this iconic Italian food.

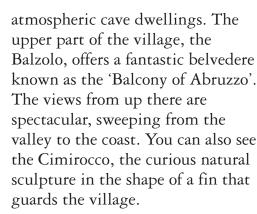






SAN DOMENICO IN PRETORO On the first Sunday of May, with the sacred representation called 'Lu Lope' depicting the key moments of the miracle of San Domenico. There is also a fascinating procession of the serpari (snake handlers), which is linked to the popular belief that San Domenico protects from snake bites.

the Gorges of Fara San Martino, which are considered among the most impressive in the Apennines. A narrow passage in the rock leads to a gorgeous valley with the ruins of an ancient Benedictine abbey dating to the 9th century, where beautiful basreliefs and decorated columns are still visible. The gorges of Fara San Martino are famous among trekkers,



La Macina in

Pennapiedimonte



who can find several hiking trails here. One of these will take you to the top of Mount Amaro, the highest peak of the Majella (2,793 metres), and it's not uncommon here to meet a chamois jumping up and down the mountains.

About half an hour drive south of Fara San Martino, Pennapiedimonte sits scenically on a steep ridge overlooking the valley of the Avello river. Once a thriving centre of stonecutters, now it's a peaceful village where time seems to stand still. It consists of a maze of narrow streets and tight steps leading to ancient houses and oil mills carved into the rock, which remind visitors of Matera's

The next stop for the day was Guardiagrele, the 'stone town' that Gabriele D'Annunzio mentioned in his novel *The Triumph of Death*. The poet came up with this nickname after admiring the grandiose white stone façade of the Collegiate Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the town's cathedral. The building is a treasure trove of artistic jewels, including a beautiful portal in Abruzzese Gothic style, the majestic fresco of San Cristoforo covering the side portico, and a civic museum with interesting testimonies of the town's artistic heritage.

There's a strong craft tradition in Guardiagrele and it's definitely worth setting some time aside to







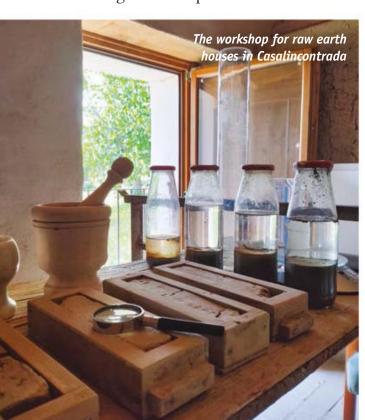


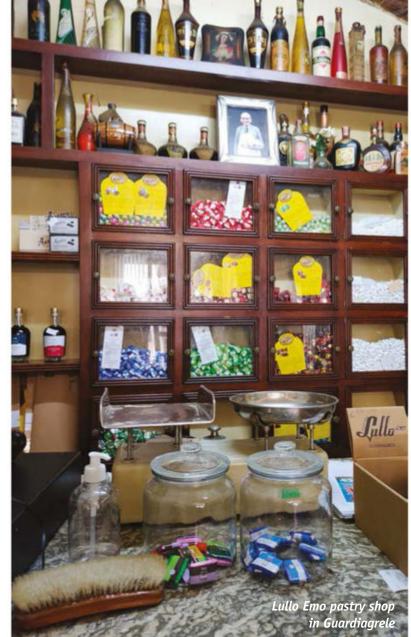


browse its many artisan shops, some of which are housed inside the town's old defensive walls. During my tour, I visited the workshop of Filippo Scioli, the local master of wrought iron, and admired the fabulous handmade ceramics of Stefania Santone.

CLASSIC DESSERT

In need of a refuel after all the sightseeing, I feasted on local specialities at the Santa Chiara Restaurant, followed by a visit to Lullo Emo to try the town's classic dessert: *sise delle monache*, a sinful sugary pleasure of soft sponge, creamy custard and icing sugar in a shape that calls to mind





three mountains (or three breasts, depending on the interpretation). This quaint little shop even has a handy brush on the counter so that customers can easily wipe off the powdered sugar that inevitably spills all over the clothes when they are eating the dessert.

More surprises awaited in Casalincontrada, the place to experience sleeping in a house made of local raw earth. There are about 800 such traditional buildings in Abruzzo, which are precious testimonies of local peasant life in the early 1800s, and Casalincontrada is one of the key centres to admire them. Here, local architect Gianfranco Conti hosts workshops

DON'T MISS

THE FEAST OF THE FARCHIE A giant bonfire made with tall, thin bundles of reeds celebrates the miracle of Sant'Antonio in 1799, when the saint turned the trees of the forest into giant flames to stop the French invaders. Every year on January the 16th in Fara Filiorum Petri.

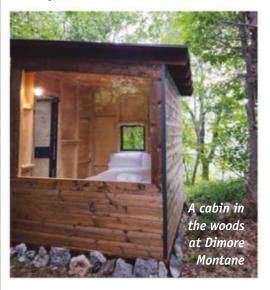


WHERE TO STAY

DIMORE MONTANE 6

Contrada Macchiametola, Roccamorice www.dimoremontane.com

A beautiful glamping site immersed in 20,000 square metres of unspoiled woodland, offering furnished cabins and tents, traditional rooms, camping grounds equipped for campers and caravans, and also a restaurant honouring regional culinary traditions.



B&B CASA MILÀ 6 *Piazza Roma, Pretoro*

☎ +39 334 992 5508

A cosy bed & breakfast set in a renovated 18th-century house in the historical centre of Pretoro. There are four rooms here, all of which offer incredible views. Guests can dine in the old cellar, beautifully carved into the rock, on the delicious dishes of *mamma* Maria.



BORGOCAPO •

Via Maiella 151, Casalincontrada

www.borgocapo.com

A characterful bed & breakfast occupying one of the 800 earth houses that still exist in Abruzzo. Borgocapo serves a delightful breakfast of zero-kilometre products, with your choice of everything from grape juice to local cheese and honey.

IL GRANDE FAGGIO 3

Via Fontepalombo 36, Pretoro

www.ilgrandefaggio.it

A comfortable hostel in a panoramic position at the top of the medieval village of Pretoro. Beds are distributed over four rooms and the hosts serve traditional dishes in the porch overlooking the valley, or by the fireplace in winter.

DISCOVER ITALIA!

WHERE TO EAT

Decontra di Caramanico Terme

www.agripietrantica.com

An organic farm amid nature, where Marisa and her family offer menus that delve into the roots of Abruzzo's culinary traditions. Dishes highlight greens and herbs grown in the farm's garden and there are ample supplies of house wine and sweet homemade liqueurs. Marisa also hosts fun cooking lessons for those keen to learn.



AGRITURISMO THOLOS 40

Località Collarso, Roccamorice

www.agriparktholos.com

Tasty vegetable calzones, pallotte cace e ove (cheese and egg balls) and parrozzo, a traditional cake. The owners produce most of the ingredients, including the grains to make pasta and bread and fresh milk used for cheeses. Many of their products are also available for purchase.





SANTA CHIARA RESTAURANT 4

Via Roma 10, Guardiagrele

www.facebook.com/ santachiararistorante

Set in the historical centre of Guardiagrele, with splendid vaulted ceilings. It serves a rich menu of classic recipes with a gourmet twist, prepared using wild herbs that grow in the Majella Park.



AGRITURISMO L'ANTICO TRATTURO @

Via Piana della Masseria, 2 Fara Filiorum Petri

www.anticotratturo.it

A splendid stone farmhouse with a pool immersed in the greenery of the Majella Park. The owner likes to pamper his guests with excellent local dishes, fascinating tales and fun songs. The house speciality is asado-style grilling.



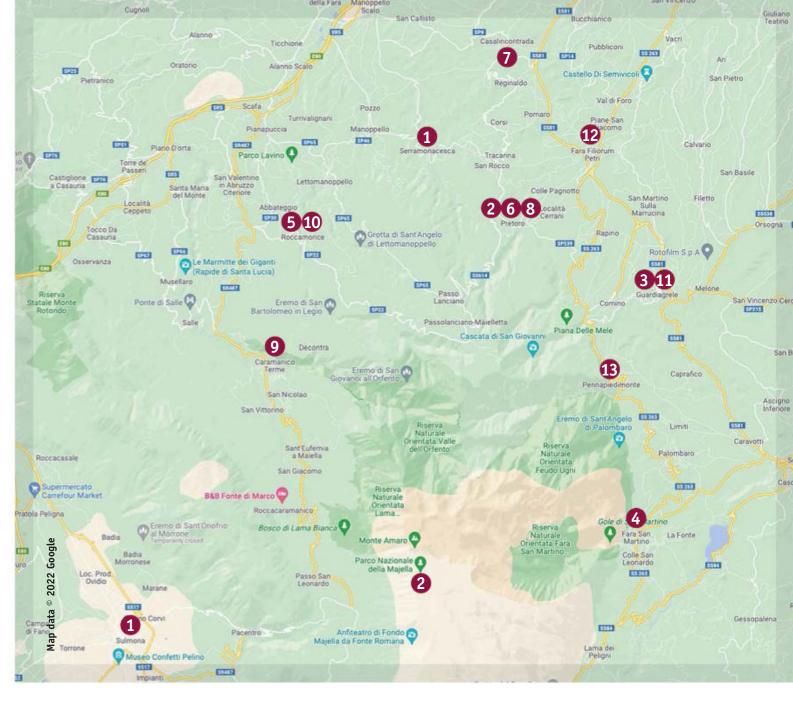
LA MACINA (B)

Vico Privato di Via San Rocco, Pennapiedimonte

www.birrerialamacina.it

A unique drinking hole housed in a 19th-century oil mill. You'll find a great selection of beers accompanied by cold cuts, cheeses and traditional market cooking.





about this natural construction technique, where participants can manipulate samples of local earth. He also turned an old earth house into a unique bed and breakfast, Borgocapo, which made for a relaxing overnight stay.

For dinner, I went to Agriturismo L'Antico Tratturo in Fara Filiorum Petri, an unmissable stop when visiting this part of Abruzzo. I had delicious fire-roasted meat and delicacies from the land, served in a scenic natural setting and accompanied by the fascinating tales of the owner.



WOLVES AND SPIRITUALITY

The following day I headed to Pretoro, a fairytale mountain village with a cluster of stone buildings and mysterious covered passages. When the lights are on at night, it looks like a fascinating nativity scene. Surrounded by enchanting forests, Pretoro has been known as the town of *fusari* (the wood craftsmen who made spindles to spin wool) for a long time. Today, spindles are used to lead visitors through the quaint alleys and steep stairs of the village.

The main landmark here is the Church of San Nicola, which houses

➤ KEY TO

RESTAURANT PRICES

(full meal per
person, not
including wine)

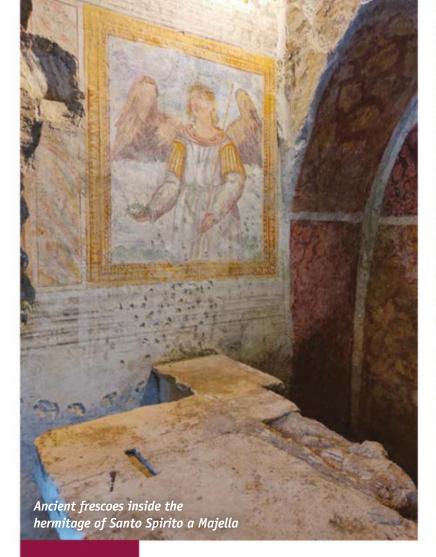
© Up to €25

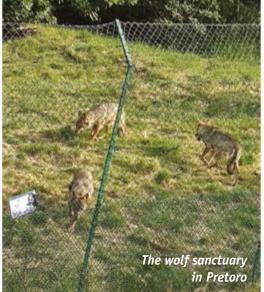
© © €26-€50

© © More than €50

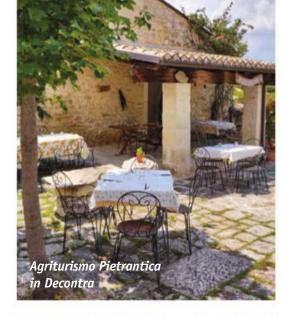














DON'T MISS

THE CALDORESCHI **FESTIVAL** An historical reenactment that draws crowds of curious travellers to the lovely medieval village of Pacentro every August. For six days, this unique event takes visitors back to the year 1450, when the village was ruled by the Princes of Caldora, with figures in period costumes staging duels, historical processions, medieval dances, and gatherings of witches.

the statue of San Domenico Abate, the village's patron saint, who is believed to have saved a child from a wolf. This story has been handed down from generation to generation, and every year, in early May, it is celebrated through an emotional representation called *Lu Lope* — 'The Wolf' in the local dialect.

There is also a Wolf Museum showcasing elements used during the festival and narrating the strong link between wolves and this territory. To get a closer look at these fascinating animals, you can also visit the sanctuary run by Fabrizio Chiavaroli, and Il Grande Faggio

rocky balconies, ancient frescoes, and a scenic Holy Stair dug into the rock that pilgrims used to climb on their knees in order to receive a plenary indulgence for their sins.

ABRUZZESE PASTA AND A NIGHT IN THE WOODS

The peaceful hamlet of Decontra, on the northwest flank of Majella, was my destination for a late lunch in nature. There, I met Marisa, who runs the charming organic farmhouse Agriturismo Pietrantica and teaches how to make *maccheroni alla chitarra*, traditional Abruzzese pasta made with a special tool that

abandoned structure amid the woods into sustainable lodging. I slept in a cosy tent lulled by the trees rustling quietly outside. There also camping grounds, more traditional rooms, and some adorable wooden cabins available to guests. Undoubtedly the perfect ending to an incredible trip which revealed that little corners of paradise do still exist.

➤ BY PLANE

GETTING THERE

You can fly to Pescara direct from London Stansted with Ryanair, but the service ends in October. You can also fly from Milan Linate with the new ITA Airways

and from Bergamo with Ryanair.

➤ BY TRAIN

You can get to Pescara Centrale using the Frecciargento trains from Milan (4½ hours) and the Regionale Veloce trains from Rome (3½ hours). Check train times and fares on www.trenitalia.com

➤ BY BUS

The journey to Pescara takes 2½ hours from Rome Tiburtina and about 7 hours from Milan with Flixbus.

➤ WHILE YOU ARE THERE
Once you reach Pescara, Val recommends
renting a car for maximum flexibility.

This remote mountain landscape made Majella popular for religious isolation

just outside the village, where injured wolves are rescued and live in security and semi-liberty.

This remote mountain landscape made Majella a popular destination for religious isolation and monastic living, as testified by the presence of numerous hermitages and abbeys nestled into the woods. One of these is Santo Spirito a Majella, an ancient hermitage carved into the side of a mountain before the year 1000. It's a place of profound peace and beauty, rich in history and beautiful details to discover (you may recognise it in some scenes of Paolo Sorrentino's *The New Pope*). There are stunning

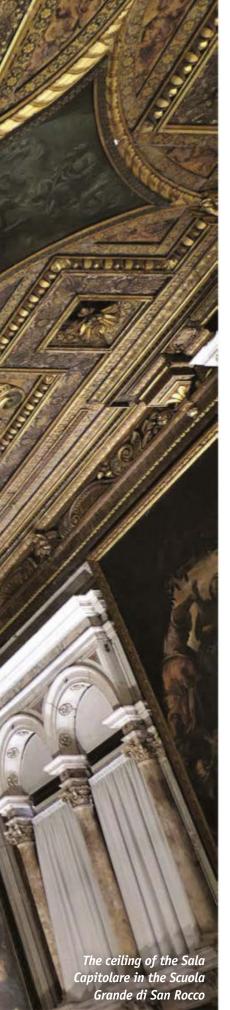
cuts the dough into square-shaped spaghetti. After a warm welcome with a glass of homemade rose liquor, I enjoyed a delightful al fresco lunch with traditional dishes prepared using ingredients straight from the garden. Marisa and her husband are lovely hosts and create that unique family atmosphere that makes it hard to leave.

My final night in Majella was a traditional local meal in Agriturismo Tholos, followed by an exciting glamping experience at Dimore Montane. This place is the dream of four friends who quit their jobs and joined forces to turn an

FIND OUT MORE

➤ Val was a guest of the Camera di Commercio Cheti Pescara and Abruzzissimo Magazine (www. abruzzissimo.com). To find out more about the Majella National Park, see www.parcomajella.it.







narrow alley, the Salizada San Rocco, squeezes between a *gelateria* and the apse of the Church of the Frari, and widens into a small *campo*, at the end of which the Church of St Roch can be found.

Here the saint's body rests complete, so they say, except

for one finger. Venice is blessed with many cosy little squares, and this one is particularly worth finding. The façade of San Rocco's church is handsome, though 18th century; but forming a right angle with the church is the splendid façade of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, largely unchanged since the 16th century.

San Rocco – Saint Roch, in English – is a somewhat mysterious character. Some say he was born in Montpellier, in southern France, in the late 13th century. Others insist he was born in Voghera, in Lombardy, in the early 14th century. (In fact, it was from Voghera that two Venetian brothers, following a well-known Venetian tradition, stole his body and spirited it back to La Serenissima.)

When his wealthy parents died, Rocco, following another well-known tradition, gave all his money and possessions to the needy, donned the simple clothes of a pilgrim, and set out to comfort the poor and sick. He contracted bubonic plague, fled into the wilderness to pray, and survived; and thereafter, in pious thanks to God, spent his life helping plague victims, miraculously curing many of them. To judge from the hundreds of paintings and sculptures his story inspired, he often hiked up his tunic to show the healed bubo on his thigh, no doubt to give hope to the suffering.

The Scuola Grande di San Rocco is the home of a confraternity, or brotherhood, of citizens, formed in 1478, dedicated to the saint and to providing aid to the sick, especially to victims of the plagues that repeatedly afflicted the city. In the years when the Republic flourished, there were numerous *scuole* formed by tradesmen and artisans in Venice, analogous to the guilds of the European Middle Ages; these were the small schools, *le scuole piccole*.

There were six – perhaps seven – *scuole grandi*, however, that were quite different: large confraternities of wealthy, often aristocratic citizens. They were social clubs, where men of similar standing could hobnob, and they were furnished and decorated elaborately for the purpose. But they were also charitable institutions, each with its own speciality: caring for the sick, feeding and clothing the destitute, providing dowries for poor young women, and so on.

Of all the *scuole grandi*, the Scuola di San Rocco is the only one whose property and organization have survived relatively intact. Behind the half-Renaissance, half-Byzantine façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, for example, you'll now find Venice's main hospital. If you pass through the archway in Pietro Lombardo's exquisite marble screen guarding the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista, you'll find that their famous cycle of paintings by Carpaccio, Gentile Bellini and others, has been moved to the Accademia. Time has dealt similar blows to the other great 'schools' as well – except for San Rocco's.

There, behind that marvellous façade, are rooms connected by graceful staircases, great windows framed by slender Corinthian columns, marble floors with polychrome inlay, walls and ceilings covered with elaborate mouldings of deeply carved and gilded wood framing giant oil paintings. In the magnificent Sala Capitolare, the Upper Assembly Hall, I came face to face with the creator of most of the paintings. He was growing like a sturdy branch out of the glowing walnut wainscotting that lined the room. Turns out he was a wooden sculpture, one of a dozen or so, by Francesco Pianta, from the 1670s. There he was, Jacopo Robusti, glaring fixedly at me in the light of a nearby lantern. His fellow artists called him *Il Furioso* because of the speed and violence of his working technique. He was also known as Tintoretto, because his father was a cloth dyer, a tintore, and as Tintoretto he is remembered today.

It all began with a clever but rather disreputable trick. When the Brothers invited several painters, including Veronese, to submit sketches for an oval panel of San Rocco for the ceiling of their Sala dell'Albergo, Il Furioso instead managed to complete and secretly

Tintoretto continued to paint for the Schola for another twenty-five years

install a fully finished oil painting in the desired space. The other artists were incensed and the Brothers were hesitant, but Jacopo said that if the Scuola didn't want to pay him, he'd let them have the picture for free.

It was an offer the Brothers couldn't, or at least didn't, refuse; and Tintoretto continued to paint for the Scuola for another twenty-five years, earning a reputation that brought him many other commissions. He married Faustina Episcopi, daughter of a prominent member of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, and eventually joined the Brothers of San Rocco as a member of the confraternity.

The Brothers did well, too: for a quarter-century, they enjoyed the services of one of the greatest painters of the Venetian Renaissance for the very economical sum of 100 ducats a year, a phenomenal value whether measured by artistic merit or square yard of canvas – *Il Furioso* liked his pictures large, and they cover most walls and ceilings of the Scuola's vast headquarters.

When you visit, use the hand-held mirrors the Brothers provide to view the ceilings or your neck will regret it. And if you've been wondering what happened to San Rocco's missing finger, it's in a silver reliquary in the Treasury on the top floor.



<u>ABOUT THE</u> WRITER

JOE GARTMAN writes about travel, history and culture, and divides his time between the southwest US and Europe. Learn more at www.joegartman.com

In this edition of our bilingual feature, **Tom Alberto Bull** reports on the passing of a female mafia boss and reflects on the relative absence of women at the forefront of mainstream Italian politics

KEY WORDS

Useful Italian words and phrases to add to your vocabulary

- ☐ **In piena luce del giorno**In broad daylight
- ☐ Che aveva dato l'ordine Who had given the order
- ☐ **Incinta di sei mesi** Six months pregnant
- ☐ Senza pensarci due volte Without a second thought
- ☐ Era convinta che
 Was convinced that
- ☐ **Un film basato sulla sua vita**A film based on her life
- ☐ **Una conferenza stampa**A press conference
- ☐ **La sua bellezza** Her beauty
- Non è abituato a
 Isn't accustomed to
- ☐ **Degne di rispetto**Worthy of respect
- ☐ **Un comunicato congiunto**A joint statement
- ☐ **In netto contrasto con**In stark contrast to



Assunta Maresca, la prima donna della Camorra a diventare boss, è morta all'età di 86 anni. Maresca, soprannominata "la Pupetta", è venuta alla ribalta dopo aver ucciso, in piena luce del giorno, Antonio Esposito, un boss mafioso che aveva dato l'ordine di ammazzare suo marito. Allora lei aveva soltanto 18 anni ed era incinta di sei mesi, e quindi diversa dai soliti indagati, ma è stata trovata colpevole e condannata a 14 anni in carcere. Lei reagì in maniera provocatoria, dichiarando alla corte che lo avrebbe rifatto senza pensarci due volte.

La vicenda le portò una certa notorietà in città e dopo il suo rilascio iniziò un rapporto con Umberto Ammaturo, un noto trafficante di droga e di armi. Quando suo figlio maggiore, Pasqualino, sparì dalla circolazione, presunto morto, Maresca era convinta che Umberto fosse coinvolto per motivi di gelosia. Ciononostante, rimase con lui per proteggere i loro figli gemelli, continuando a scalare l'organizzazione.

Maresca era un personaggio molto noto al pubblico nonostante i suoi legami con la criminalità. Nel 1967 interpretò il suo ruolo in un film basato sulla sua vita, e nel 1982 contestò apertamente un boss di un clan rivale durante una conferenza stampa. La sua bellezza e la piccola statura la rendevano uno scudo ideale per proteggere i suoi quattro fratelli e altri membri del clan dalle attenzioni dei media.

In un paese che non è abituato a vedere le donne in posizioni di potere, Assunta Maresca spiccava. Delle tre organizzazioni mafiose in Italia, la Camorra è quella che si è dimostrata più disposta a conferire ruoli di importanza alle donne. Questo riflette la società napoletana più in generale, in cui le donne sono considerate da tempo figure di autorità degne di rispetto.

Ciò è in netto contrasto con il mondo politico in cui non c'è mai stata una donna eletta primo ministro o presidente della repubblica. Difatti la corsa alla presidenza di quest'anno comprendeva un candidato molto conosciuto, in quanto l'ottantacinquenne Silvio Berlusconi si accingeva ad un ritorno alle scene. La notizia ha incitato varie personalità del mondo della cultura e dello spettacolo a rilasciare un comunicato congiunto dichiarando che è arrivato il momento di eleggere una donna a capo di stato: "Non ci sono ragioni accettabili per rimandare ancora questa scelta. Sarà la nostra e la vostra forza."

Negli anni si sono spesso discussi i paragoni e i legami tra la mafia e il governo, ma è piuttosto ironico che l'organizzazione criminale sia arrivata prima nell'accettare le donne al timone. Forse il 2022 sarà l'anno in cui finalmente la classe politica recupera il distacco.





THE LITTLE DOLL AND THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE

The first woman to become a Camorra boss, Assunta Maresca, has died at the age of 86. Maresca, also known as 'the Little Doll' (La Pupetta), shot to fame after murdering, in broad daylight, Antonio Esposito, a mafia boss who had ordered the killing of her husband. She was just 18 years old at the time and six months pregnant, which naturally made her an unusual suspect, yet she was convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison. She reacted with defiance, telling the court that she would do it again without giving it a second thought.

The incident gave her notoriety in the city and upon release she started a relationship with Umberto Ammaturo, a renowned drug trafficker and arms dealer. After her first son, Pasqualino, went missing, suspected dead, Maresca was convinced that Umberto had been involved because of his jealousy. Despite this, she stayed with him to protect their twin children, and she continued to rise through the organisation.

Maresca was also very well known by the public despite her criminal connections. In 1967 she played herself in a film based on her life, and in 1982 she openly challenged a rival clan boss during a press conference. Her natural good looks and small stature made her an ideal front, shielding her four brothers and fellow clansmen from the media spotlight.

In a country that isn't accustomed to seeing women in positions of such power she stood out. Out of the three mafia clans in Italy, the Camorra has a track record of elevating female members to prominent roles. This is a reflection of the wider society of Naples, in which women have long been considered figures of authority worthy of respect.

This is also in stark contrast to the political landscape, in which there has never been a female Prime Minister or President of the Republic. In fact the presidential race this year featured a very familiar candidate, as 85-year-old Silvio Berlusconi looked set to mount another comeback. This news prompted various personalities from the world of culture and entertainment to release a joint statement declaring that it was time for the next Head of State to be a woman: "There are no acceptable reasons to postpone this choice any longer. It will be our strength and yours."

The comparisons and links between the mafia and the government have been pointed out over many years, but there is a certain irony that the criminal organisation was the first to accept female leaders at the helm. Perhaps 2022 will be the year that the political elite finally closes the gap.



- ☐ **È** arrivato il momento di The time has come to
- ☐ **È piuttosto ironico che**It's kind of ironic that
- ☐ **Le donne al timone**Women at the helm











The pandemic put paid to much live entertainment, but now live opera is back at a full house. **Adrian Mourby** celebrates the best of Italy's opera festivals and points out what to look forward to this year

taly has many great opera houses: La Scala in Milan, La Fenice in Venice, and San Carlo in Naples... to mention just a few. It also has many wonderful opera festivals. Some are tiny events that take place for one night only, perhaps in a dusty 18th-century, 50-seater opera house in some hilltop village. Others may be held in front of temporary bleachers erected in the main piazza of a Tuscan town. Then there are opera festivals so popular and prestigious that flashing police cars escort government ministers to the VIP entrance.

There are opera festivals devoted to specific composers - Verdi in Parma, Puccini in Torre del Lago, Rossini in Pesaro, and Donizetti in Bergamo. There are also festivals that celebrate a unique location. In Verona the Roman amphitheatre was first repurposed for opera in 1913 when Aida was staged to celebrate the

100th anniversary of Giuseppe Verdi's birth. But since 1936 the Festival dell'Arena di Verona has been an annual summer event, staging monumental productions before an audience of more than 15,000 people.

In Rome, Teatro dell'Opera annually produces a festival of concerts, opera and dance at the ancient

the Verona Arena

Baths of Caracalla. The central caldarium of these 3rdcentury thermal baths has been the company's summer home since 1937. It was also the 1990 venue for the first Three Tenors Concert, but these days it is the home of the Terme Di Caracalla Summer Music Festival.



TEATRO ALLA SCALA, MILAN

Then there are festivals so popular and prestigious that flashing police cars escort government ministers to the VIP entrance



TEATRO GIUSEPPE VERDI,

46 ITALIA! April/May 2022

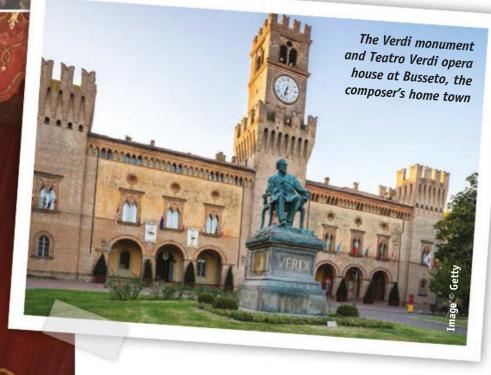
BUSSETO

OPERA FESTIVAL VENUES

It can sometimes feel as if there is not a single piece of Roman architecture in Italy that hasn't become the venue for an opera festival. That said, the 58-year-old Macerata Opera Festival takes place at the Sferisterio, a long, curving 19th-century arena built for sport and bullfights. Opera began to be staged here after 1914, playing to audiences of over 3,000. The stage is unusually wide (40 metres) which means that musicians at each end of the pit cannot always hear each other and have to rely heavily on the conductor. A tenor who can carry a note from one side of the stage to another receives roars of applause suitable for a gladiator of old.

The 58-year-old Macerata Opera Festival takes place at the Sferisterio, a long, curving 19th-century arena built for sport and bullfights

Not all festivals are summer events. Parma's annual Verdi Festival, now in its 22nd year, takes place in September and October. The festival uses a number of venues in the city, including the Teatro Regio built for Napoleon's second wife, the Duchess of Parma, as well as the charming Teatro Verdi in nearby Busseto, Verdi's home town. The annual Donizetti Festival in Bergamo is a recent newcomer to the festival world – and another "home town" event. It only started in 2014 but almost



immediately won "Best Festival" at Berlin's annual *Oper!* Awards. Given that Donizetti's birthday is in November – and given that the rest of the Italian year is so full – this festival in Bergamo's Teatro Gaetano Donizetti has established itself as the last of the calendar year.

OPERA IN A TIME OF COVID

Even in a time of Covid these popular festivals have kept going. Because the pandemic in Italy hit Bergamo

TOP 10 OPERA FESTIVALS FOR 2022



1 FESTIVAL DELL'ARENA DI VERONA

DATES 17th June – 4th September 2022 **LOCATION** The city of Verona's gladiatorial arena, built in 30 AD

SPECIALITY Large-scale Italian productions like *Nabucco, Aida* and *Turandot,* but also a large-scale *Carmen* on occasions.

PRACTICALITIES Performances traditionally begin at dusk, when spectators bring their own cushions to modify the impact of the ancient stone seats. Do book your restaurant in advance. The venues around the arena will be heaving.

WHERE TO STAY The stylish Hotel Milano et Spa (www.hotelmilano-vr.it) is only a minute's walk from the Arena and has a delightful roof terrace with a jacuzzi and views of the Arena.

WHERE TO EAT A whole bank of bars and restaurants face the Arena along Piazza Bra, so the choice is yours. Ristorante Vittorio Emanuele (www.ristorantevittorioemanuele.com) is open for breakfast at 8am and doesn't finish serving after-show cocktails until 2am.

www.arena.it



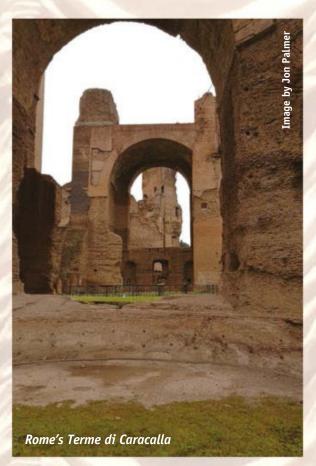
2 FESTIVAL PUCCINI, TORRE DEL LAGO PUCCINI

DATES 15 July – 27 August 2022 **LOCATION** The village of Torre del Lago Puccini on the shores of Lake Massaciuccoli, Tuscany **SPECIALITY** The operas of Puccini, staged where he composed his most popular works. Shortly before he died, Giacomo Puccini privately confided that he would love to have heard one of his own operas performed by this lake.

PRACTICALITIES This open-air lakeside theatre is magical but the quality of sound diminishes rapidly the further your seat is from the stage, and at the first drop of rain the unprotected orchestra stops playing. Fortunately this is very rare.

WHERE TO STAY There is one hotel by the lakeside, The Butterfly (www.ilnidodamorebutterfly.it), but many visitors stay in Lucca, which was Puccini's birthplace. Guests take a minibus nightly. The Ilaria (www.hotelilaria.com) will help arrange transport. WHERE TO EAT Chalet del Lago (www.chaletdellago .it) is actually on the lake and right next to the open-air theatre.

www.puccinifestival.it



3 TERME DI CARACALLA SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

DATES 3 June – 9 August 2022. This year Rome will be staging 2021's postponed festival.

LOCATION The spectacular ancient ruins of the city's Baths of Caracalla

SPECIALITY Much variety – Italian big hitter operas like *Aida* but in 2020 there were three nights of Gershwin ballet. Andrea Boccelli usually gives a heartfelt concert too.

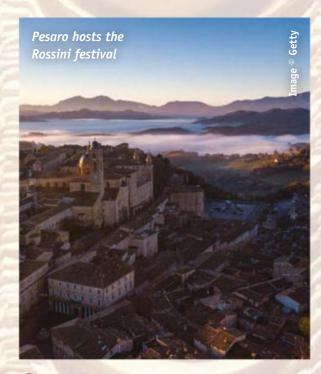
WHERE TO STAY JKRoma (www.jkroma.com) is a modern boutique hotel and Hotel Eden (www. dorchestercollection.com) is a grand 19th-century edifice close to Villa Borghese. Both have superb concierges who will make sure everything happens as you want it to happen.

WHERE TO EAT Everywhere in Rome is wonderful for dinner, of course, but Aroma (www.aroma



restaurant.it), a mere nine-minute taxi ride from the Baths – which themselves are set a little apart from the city centre – has an unbelievably good night-time view of the Colosseum.

www.operaroma.it



4 ROSSINI OPERA FESTIVAL

DATES 18 July – 21 August 2020

LOCATION The seaside resort of Pesaro, Le Marche **SPECIALITY** All of Rossini's 39 operas. Many of his concert works are also performed.

WHERE TO STAY Hotel San Marco (www. hotelsanmarcopu.it) is unremarkable but only a two-minute walk from Teatro Rossini. Grand Hotel Vittoria is on the beach and lives up to its name but it's 15 minutes from the theatre. (www.grandhotelvittoriapesaro.it)

WHERE TO EAT Lo Scudiero (www.

ristorantescudiero.it) is a Michelin-starred restaurant halfway between Rossini's birthplace and Teatro Rossini. It sits modestly down a narrow old alleyway but gets great reviews.

www.rossinioperafestival.it



so badly, the Donizetti Festival in 2020 had to rapidly adapt, putting its orchestra (socially distanced) on stage, its singers in the auditorium and broadcasting performances live nightly from the Donizetti theatre. But the 2020 the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago

house of Venice, and one of the world's most famous theatres

The Donizetti Festival in 2020 had to rapidly adapt, putting its orchestra (socially distanced) on stage and its singers in the auditorium

performed as ever to a live audience at its al fresco lakeside venue, albeit with a reduced programme in front of a predominantly local and socially distanced audience. Parma's Verdi Festival 2020 also didn't cancel.

WELCOMING BACK VISITORS

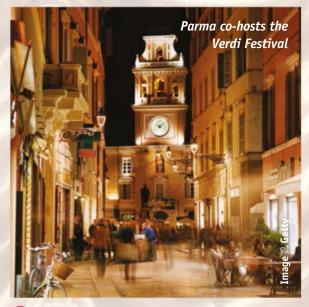
In 2022, as the impact of Covid-19 recedes, Italy is looking forward to welcoming back international visitors to its opera festivals. We trust you find our calendar useful, and the information about the travel companies offering opera

tour packages, and our where to stay and where to eat info if you're arranging your own travel – of course, eating well and drinking well

is as much a part of Italian opera festivals as the music itself.

Adrian Mourby is
leading two tours to
the Puccini Festival at
Torre del Lago in July and
August this summer. For further details
contact mail@adrianmourby.com





5 VERDI FESTIVAL

DATES 22 Sept – 16 Oct 2022. Four weeks stretching from the end of September and into mid-October.

LOCATION Parma and nearby Busseto, which was Verdi's home town, if not his actual birthplace.

SPECIALITY The complete canon of Verdi opera in a variety of styles. Some productions are traditional, others push the directorial envelope.

WHERE TO STAY There are a lot of boutique hotels in the historical centre. Palazzo Dalla Rosa Prati (www.palazzodallarosaprati.it) is next to the historic Duomo and Baptistery and just a three-minute walk from Teatro Regio.

WHERE TO EAT In Busetto, especially if you're going for the opera, be sure to eat at the atmospheric I Due Foscari (www.iduefoscari.it), which was opened by Verdian tenor Carlo Bergonzi and is now run by his son.

www.festivalverdi.it



6 MAGGIO MUSICALE FIORENTINO

DATES 27 April - 30 June 2022

LOCATION Various venues within the city of Florence

SPECIALITY A mix of little-known Italian operas and big events. For example in 2020 Placido Domingo was due to sing Germont Père in *La Traviata* before Covid intervened.

WHERE TO STAY JK Place (www.jkplace.com) on Piazza Santa Maria Novella offers boutique luxury and very friendly service. Villa Cora (www.villacora .it) across the Arno is an immaculately restored 19th-century mansion in its own grounds.

WHERE TO EAT Il Borro (www.ilborrotuscanbistro .it) is a bright, modern bistro located inside an old

chapel alongside the Arno (there are still frescoes on the ceiling). It opened specifically to showcase wines from the Il Borro vineyard, which lies some 60km south of Florence.

www.maggiofiorentino.com



7 FESTIVAL DELLA VALLE D'ITRIA

DATES 19 July – 6 August 2022

LOCATION Martina Franca, Apulia

SPECIALITY Now in its 46th year, the Valle d'Itria festival continues a policy of staging forgotten Italian operas at Martina Franca's Palazzo Ducale. WHERE TO STAY B&B San Martino (www.bandb sanmartino.com) is cosy and within easy-walking distance of Palazzo Ducale, while Relais Villa San Martino (www.relaisvillasanmartino.it) is the luxury option in the countryside, 3km south of the historical centre.

WHERE TO EAT Ristorante Trattoria "La Tana" (www.ristorantelatana.it) is conveniently close to the palace in Via Pietro Mascagni and serves gorgeous local Apulian wine.

www.festivaldellavalleditria.it



8 MACERATA OPERA FESTIVAL

DATES TBC. Usually the last two weeks of July and the first week of August

LOCATION An old bullring in Macerata, Campania **SPECIALITY** Each year in Macerata has a theme. In 2018 its subject was *verdesperanza* (Green as Hope) and in 2019 *rossodesiderio* (Red as Desire). 2020 was *biancocoraggio* (White as Courage). Each year operas are selected to exemplify aspects of the chosen concept.

WHERE TO STAY You cannot get any closer than the petite Albergo Arena (www.albergoarena.com) in Vicolo Sferisterio, which is also very reasonably priced – but it books up quickly.

WHERE TO EAT Osteria di Fiori (www.osteriadeifiori .it) is only a three-minute walk from the Sferisterio down a very narrow alley. The owners, Iginia, Paolo e Letizia Carducci, serve beautifully presented local dishes on red tablecloths.

www.sferisterio.it



OPERA BARGA

DATES TBC. Usually the last week of July and first two weeks of August

LOCATION Various venues in the tiny hilltop comune of Barga, north of Lucca in Tuscany **SPECIALITY** Small-scale opera performed in the town's jewel-like Teatro dei Differenti.

WHERE TO STAY Nel Cielo di Barga Bed & Breakfast (www.nelcielodibarga.com) is a romantic two-person penthouse suite overlooking the town, and a two-minute walk from the theatre. Book early to avoid disappointment.

WHERE TO EAT Giro di Boa (☎ +39 328 212 2012) in the old town has a great reputation for seafood and a comfortable location.

www.visitbarga.com/en/barga-en/ opera-barga-festival



10 DONIZETTI FESTIVAL

DATES TBC. Late November and early December **LOCATION** The beautifully restored 18th-century Teatro Gaetano Donizetti in the composer's home town of Bergamo.

SPECIALITY Usually three operas from Donizetti's back catalogue of 75, very often re-edited beforehand to provide the definitive score. **WHERE TO STAY** B&B Santa Lucia (www.

bbsantaluciabergamo.com) is a modern pensione on Via Giuseppe Garibaldi that is a nine-minute walk from Teatro Donizetti.

WHERE TO EAT Terazza Fausti (www.legami sushiandmore.it) is part of sushi chain of just five locations across Italy. It also happens to be 100 metres from the Teatro Donizetti.

www.donizetti.org/en/festival-donizetti

OPERA PACKAGE TOURS FOR 2022

➤ ARIA TOURS www.ariatours.com

➤ PALIO TOURS www.paliotours.com

➤ TRAVEL FOR THE ARTS www.travelforthe arts.com

➤ GREAT
PERFORMANCE TOURS
www.greatperform
ancetours.com

➤ MUSIC LOVERS TOURS www.musiclovers

tours.com

➤ KIRKER www.kirkerholidays

➤ MAESTRO
TOURING
https://
maestrotouring.com/
music-arts-tours

Follow the sun Country The sun Country The sun The s



With its **stunning island setting**, sunny climate and rich cultural heritage, vibrant Sicily offers you the warmest of welcomes

rom sun-soaked beaches to rugged landscapes, the Mediterranean island of Sicily is the perfect destination for your next Italian holiday. The experts at the Travel Department have created three exciting seven-night, fully guided holidays, offering an unforgettable cultural experience with like-minded travellers. Visit stunning locations such as the Aeolian Islands and vibrant Palermo; explore the towering majesty of Mount Etna and the historic cities of Taormina and Syracuse – or take a tour to Savoca – the setting for scenes in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* – and local wineries. The itineraries allow plenty of free time to soak up the sun or explore local surroundings at your leisure, with comfortable hand-picked 4-star accommodation to relax in at the end of each day.













These perfectly paced holidays also allow plenty of free time to soak up the Sicilian culture on your own, with helpful tips and recommendations from your friendly expert guide

BOOK NOWfor your 2022 departure!

EXPLORE SICILY with 24 departure dates available from across the UK between 27th April and 12th October

CHOOSE FROM Travel Department's 7-night fully guided holidays to Sicily with relaxing 4 star half-board accommodation, flights and transfers included

PRICES START from £1,049*
(*including the exclusive *Italia!* Reader Saving when using code VP-ANTHEM50)

Three options to suit you:

1 Discover Sicily - Solo Traveller

www.traveldepartment.com/holiday/discover-sicily-solo-traveller

Includes:

- 7 nights in Giardini Naxos
- Discover ancient Greek and Roman ruins on a half-day trip to Syracuse Archaeological Park
- A day trip to Mount Etna
- A full day trip to filming locations from Francis Ford Coppola's film The Godfather
- Savour the regional flavours of Sicily on a half day trip to a local winery

2 Highlights of Sicily including Palermo

www.traveldepartment.com/holiday/highlights-of-sicily-including-palermo

Includes:

- 2 nights in Palermo and5 nights in Giardini Naxos
- Discover ancient Greece in Taormina and Syracuse
- Art and architecture in Palermo and Monreale: a full day guided tour
- Excursion to Mount Etna

3 Sicily and the Aeolian Islands 4 Star

www.traveldepartment.com/holiday/sicily-the-aeolian-islands

Includes:

- 7 nights in Giardini Naxos
- A full day excursion to Mount Etna and the Greek Theatre in Taormina
- A full day excursion to Siracusa
- A full day trip to the Aeolian Islands

To find out more or to book, visit www.traveldepartment.com/anthem or call 020 3936 4343, quoting 'Italia! Magazine'







Operated by Travel Department. ATOL Protected 9373. Prices are per person and based on 2 sharing. Single room supplements apply. Check in baggage may be booked at an additional cost. Prices, flight times and availability are subject to change. Booking conditions apply, please visit traveldepartment.com. **Offer Terms & Conditions**: £50pp* off any new 2022 Italy bookings for holidays of 7 nights or more by using the code VP-ANTHEM50. Offer valid until 30th April 2022. Offers are non-transferable, subject to availability, cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and have no cash value. All deposits are non-refundable. E&0E.

URBANE URBINO

Our Top 10 guide to Le Marche's Renaissance jewel

The Marche region has a glittering coastline, verdant hills, majestic mountains, and a trove of artistic treasures – **Chris Allsop** explains why your first cultural stop should be Urbino



he typical line trotted out about Le Marche – the fertile region between the Adriatic and the Apennines, between forested Abruzzo and foodie-heaven Emilia-Romagna – is that it's "Tuscany without the crowds".

As a rule for the region, neither part of this assessment is accurate. The rolling hills of Le Marche's central region are certainly redolent of its westerly neighbour, but Le Marche is much more rustic, and its population centres

much smaller (the region has less than half the population of Tuscany).

And as for the crowds... Hordes of Italians come here in the summer, though they are usually confined to the coast. But where the assessment does work is with the northern city of Urbino. This UNESCO World Heritage city is a Renaissance treasure, much like Florence or Siena – though it is markedly less crowded than either. Here you'll find luminous works of art, interesting history, and wonderful restaurants.

GETTING THERE

- The nearest airport to Urbino is Rimini. The alternatives, for travellers from the UK, are Ancona, Perugia, Florence and Bologna.
- ➤ Urbino isn't on the Italian rail network, but there are bus connections from Pesaro and Fano, which are, or you could hire a car, or take a taxi.



1 Tour the historical centre

URBINO IS AN IMPRESSIVE SIGHT. The medieval centre, arrayed across a pair of hills, is still entirely enclosed within its city walls. Out of it rises the composed turrets of the Ducal Palace – the former seat of Federico da Montefeltro, who hauled Urbino up into medieval significance. Within its walls, the entirely brick-paved streets run helter-skelter, gutters scored down their middles. Blue-grey shutters adorn the buildings and bars set out their tables with the legs cut to allow level drinking on steep streets. A walk along the walls at night, with the views into the surrounding countryside, is incredibly atmospheric. Along the way you'll encounter the monument to Raphael, his likeness elevated on a marble plinth in Piazza Roma. Head into the centre's heart to seek out an *aperitivo* in Piazza della Repubblica, which, with the city's student population, is never dull.

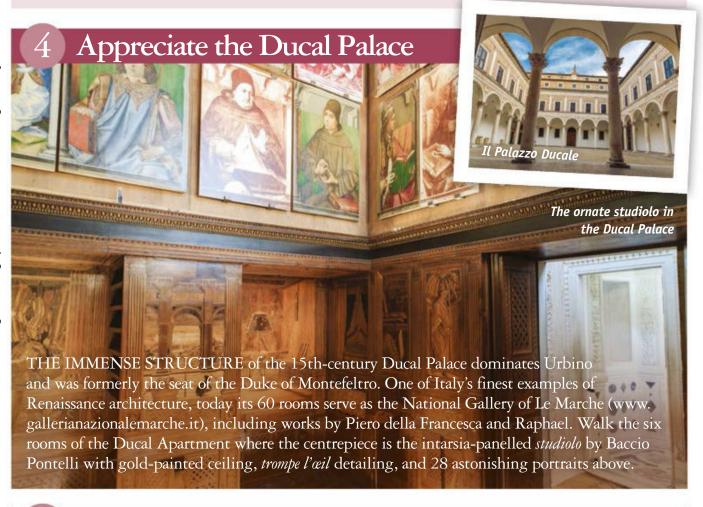


Discover the hidden treasures of Urbino's medieval quarter

3 All hail Raphael

IT WAS A SHAME that the Duke of Montefeltro – who invited artists to his city to increase his cultural capital – died in 1483, before the birth of the artist Raphael. Whereas in Florence you have a sea of talent vying to be recognised, in Urbino it's all about Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino. Raphael's work is scattered throughout the country's galleries, but you'll find some within Urbino's Ducal Palace, including his Mona

Lisa-esque *La Muta*. Find your way to Via Raffaelo to see his birthplace, now the Casa Natale di Raffaelo museum (www.casaraffaello.com). Within you'll see the courtyard where the young artist may have ground colours for his father's art, paintings by Raphael's father, as well as a fresco that may have been completed by an eight-year-old Raphael.



5 Rise above the city

AT THE SUMMIT of the medieval quarter you'll find Parco della Resistenza, not far from the Casa Natale di Raffaelo museum or the Oratory of San Giovanni Battista. This green space, filled in the warmer months with students pretending to study, offers sweeping views across Urbino, the Ducal Palace, and the elegant rumple of the surrounding countryside. The park, dedicated to the Italian Resistance in the second world war, also doubles as an

outdoor sculpture exhibit featuring artists from the city's impressive university. There's also a 14th-century fortress called Fortezza Albornoz, built by the Pope to keep an eye on the ambitious inhabitants of Urbino. It was joined to the city walls in the following century before eventually becoming a museum piece. In the summer, concerts and fairs also take place within the park. The highest point on this side of Urbino, it's also the go-to spot for the city's kite enthusiasts.



DON'T MISS...

THE DUKE OF MONTEFELTRO'S 600TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 600th anniversary of the Duke of Montefeltro's birth. This will mean an even greater hullabaloo surrounding the third Sunday of August, Urbino's Festival of the Duke, held annually in Montefeltro's honour. The medieval streets are brought to life by costumed parades, and demonstrations of artistic skills preserved since the Renaissance. Beyond the historical reenactments, restaurants tailor menus to the historical theme and children can also be tutored in the use of the slingshot (as if that sounds like a good idea). The event finishes with a display of Renaissance-era fireworks.

THE KITE FESTIVAL

The first Sunday of September is the Festa dell'Aquilone, the 'kite festival'. A more gentle inter-neighbourhood competition than the Florentine *calcio* or the jousting contests of southerly Ascoli Piceno, the kite festival is nevertheless contested with just as much ardour. With handmade kites on hand – and Urbino's reliable windiness – citizens attempt to be the ones to attain the highest altitude. Afterwards, everyone sets aside their kite-flying sour grapes at a huge banquet in front of the Ducal Palace.

LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK

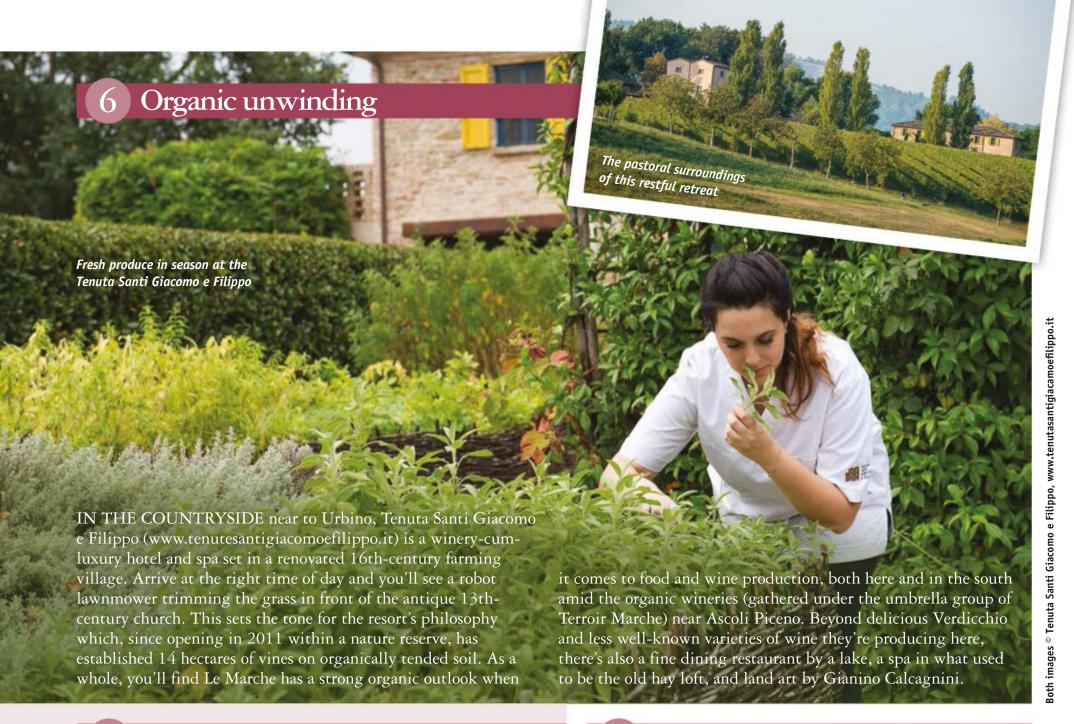
Le Marche has a selection of local food specialities. Perhaps its most high-profile culinary curiosity is the *olive all'ascolana* which you'll find throughout the region. The olive is stuffed with meat (tuna at the coast), breaded and fried. If you have mixed *antipasti* in Urbino, you will probably



also be lucky enough to get a slab of moreish Urbino cheese. Both cheese and olives go very well with Verdicchio, the region's most famous white wine known for its high acidity and citrus accents.

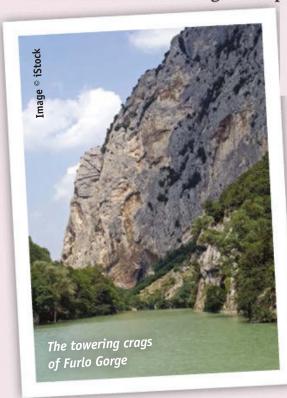
THE FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC

The Festival of Early Music (www.fima-online.org) takes place for ten days in July. It brings together musicians resurrecting Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music on their lutes, harpsichords and *viola da gambas*. The performances take place in historic settings around the old city, both inside and under the glorious Marche sun.



Discover Furlo Gorge

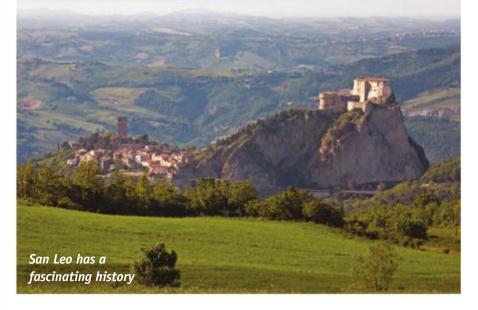
A TOWERING SPECTACLE of natural beauty, the natural splendour of nearby Furlo Gorge has majestic cliff formations, stunning views and an assortment of rare flora and fauna. Sheer limestone cliffs rise either side of the green waters of the Candigliano River and your drive will take you along the old Roman Via Flaminia, twisting and turning as it snakes through the gorge. The Flaminian Way was built in 220 BC by the Roman Consul Gaius Flaminius to give safe passage to Rome's armies to



the northern reaches of the Empire – an impressive feat of engineering that included enormous buttresses and a hand-hewn tunnel. In 76 AD, Emperor Vespasian commanded another tunnel to be dug, (still in use today), and ancient chisel marks can be seen from close up. The vertiginous scenery makes this the perfect spot for hikers, bikers and climbers, while the tiny village of Furlo sits at the start of the Furlo Pass and is an excellent place to sample local truffles when in season.

3 San Leo's incredible history

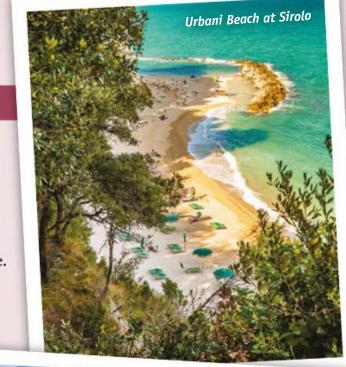
OVERLOOKING THE MARECCHIA VALLEY just over an hour's drive northwest of Urbino stands the imposing town of San Leo, installed on a strategically tricky limestone perch and built (on Roman foundations) to contain the enemies of the Pope. Called the most beautiful castle in Italy, it started life as a prison in the 8th century and continued in this employ until 1906. Its most famous prisoner was probably Giuseppe Balsamo (aka Count Cagliostro – an 18th-century occultist who infiltrated the royal courts of Europe before being denounced as "the quack of quacks" and flung into the San Leo clink. Today the fortress contains a museum and an art gallery.



9 The Conero Peninsula

WHILE PESARO might suggest itself as the obvious seaside destination in the Province of Pesaro and Urbino, if you have a little more time it's worth heading half an hour further south to the pristine Conero Peninsula. This national park, set on a limestone butte, is an oddity along the flat and sandy Marche coastline. And whereas much of the coast in this region is well mined by tourism, Conero's protected status and gorgeous-if-difficult-to-reach beaches

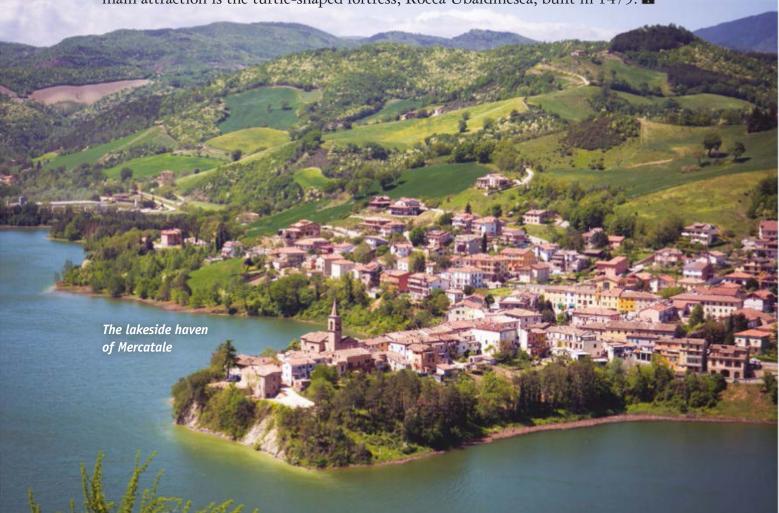
feel like a world apart (except, of course, in August). Its chief resort town is Sirolo, an 11th-century fortress turned immaculately kept village with far-reaching views. Paths wind through the pines to the crystal-clear, blue flag water and white pebble beaches (Two Sisters Beach, only accessible by water, is the pick of the bunch). Make your way to Portonovo for Ristorante Ghiachetta and grilled sardines with a crisp glass of Verdicchio while the waves crash mere metres away.





10 Take a day out

IF YOU'RE MAKING URBINO YOUR BASE, take a day out to Urbania, southwest of the city and one of Italy's 33 officially recognised DOC ceramics centres. It has its own Ducal Palace, originally the family home of Federico's wife, Gentile Brancaleoni. See also the spooky Mummy Cemetery in the Chiesa dei Morti. Saint Christopher, Urbania's patron, is celebrated on July 25th and the following Sunday with a car blessing tradition and a costumed horseback palio. Northwest of Urbino is Sassocorvaro, a fabulous location overlooking the lake at Mercatale, popular with watersports enthusiasts during the summer, and near the Colle Igea forest – great for walking and picnics. St Valentine is buried in the village, but the main attraction is the turtle-shaped fortress, Rocca Ubaldinesca, built in 1475.



WHERE TO EAT AND STAY

LOCAL AGRITURISMI

Out of the city, try a local *agriturismo* – working farms with simple, comfortable accommodation and delicious meals from their own fresh produce. For more info, visit www.agriturismo.it/en/farmhouse/marches

CA' MADDALENA

Località Ca' Maddalena, Fermignano www.camaddalena.com

About twenty minutes south of Urbino is Ca' Maddalena. It's an organic farm with rooms, a swimming pool, and even horses to ride. The restaurant is known for its excellent fresh meats, huge portions, and stunning views of the mountains.

PIETRA ROSA

Via Monte Polo, 11

www.facebook.com/agriturismoPietraRosa Another superb *agriturismo* close by, also known for its excellent food.

IN URBINO

B&B CA' LAVALLE

Ca' Corona, 2

+39 328 122 0841

Set within the grounds of a former hunting lodge – and the welcome from Alessandra and Jimmy makes you feel right at home. Breakfast includes homemade *crescia sfogliata* (the local flatbread), fresh pomegranate and a delicious cheese bread.

SAN POLO URBINO 1544

Via Aurelio Saffi, 3

sanpolo1544urbino@gmail.com

This city centre B&B is in a restored 16th-century *palazzo*. The room is magical – a lushly re-imagined space that includes a four-poster bed, coffered ceiling, and even a little alcove above the bed with a painting of George and the Dragon.

ANTICA OSTERIA DA LA STELLA

Via Santa Margherita, 1

www.anticaosteriadalastella.com

This family-run restaurant offers local delicacies such as molten Urbino cheese with truffle and treats from neighbouring regions such as *ravioli in brodo*.

IL CORTEGIANO

Via Francesco Puccinotti, 13

il-cortegiano-ristorante.business.site

Centrally located and serving delicious local specialities, the sharing *antipasti* plate is a must, with wild cherry jam, pecorino and Urbino cheese, and the spreadable sausage beloved of Le Marche's mountainous interior.

FIND OUT MORE

- www.turismo.marche.it
- http://eventi.turismo.marche.it



ST MARK'S DOMES

The five domes of Venice's Basilica di San Marco mark the shape of the Greek cross below

aint Mark's Basilica in Venice is laid out in the shape of a Greek cross – that is, a cross with arms of equal length – and its domes, or cupolas, stand over each of the four arms of the cross and at the intersection between them. St Mark's was substantially redeveloped in the 11th century, to the extent that the basilica we see today became unrecognisable from the earlier church. This is known as the Contarini construction, after the Doge who commissioned it, but the architect, whose name does not survive, was (almost certainly) from Constantinople (formerly Byzantium), which helps to explain the Greek cross and the architecture in general.







Make the most of these indulgent recipes by **James Martin** celebrating our favourite spread

Buttermilk panna cotta with radishes

Latticello cotto con radici

- > SERVES 6
- > PREPARATION 4 hours
- > COOKING 5 minutes
- · 300ml double cream
- 5 gelatine leaves, soaked in cold water for 5 minutes
- 400ml buttermilk
 TO SERVE
- 30 baby radishes
- 1 Pour the cream into a pan and bring to the boil. Take off the heat, then squeeze out the water from the gelatine and whisk the gelatine into the cream. Leave to cool, then whisk in the buttermilk.
- 2 Pour into 6 shallow bowls and chill in the fridge for 4 hours.
- 3 Top each bowl with radishes and serve.





Photography © John Carey



Clams with parsley and lemon

Vongole al prezzemolo e limone

- > SERVES 4
- > PREPARATION 15 minutes
- > COOKING 15 minutes

Fresh clams are another true joy that we have all over the world in various sizes and guises. Simply cooked with a buttered brioche crumb to add texture, these can be served on their own, or with spaghetti for a classic spaghetti vongole.

- 100g butter
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 shallot, diced
- 100ml white wine
- 1kg clams
- · 1 red chilli, diced
- zest of 2 lemons
- 1 small bunch of flat-leaf parsley, chopped

FOR THE BUTTERED BRIOCHE CRUMBS

- 100g butter
- · 200g brioche, blitzed to a crumb
- 1 In a large pan set over a medium heat, melt the butter and cook the garlic and shallot for 2 minutes.
- 2 Add the wine and clams and cook with the lid on for 4 minutes.
- 3 Meanwhile, heat the butter for the brioche crumbs in a large non-stick pan until foaming, then add the brioche crumbs and fry until golden.
- 4 Stir the chilli, lemon zest and parsley through the clams and serve in bowls sprinkled with the buttered brioche crumbs.

TIP As with all seafood, when you buy them, fresh clams will smell of the sea and not of fish. And as with all shellfish, it is absolutely imperative that you do not eat any that are not fresh. Check that each and every individual is closed before you cook them, and open afterwards. Be sure to discard any and all that fail your tests.

These can be served on their own or with spaghetti for a classic spaghetti vongole

Veal Milanese

Cotoletta alla milanese

- > SERVES 2
- > PREPARATION 20 minutes
- > COOKING 5 minutes

You can also make this dish with a veal chop battered thinly. Once coated in flour, egg and breadcrumbs, the bit that will bring flavour to the meat is cooking it in plenty, and I mean plenty, of butter. This keeps the veal moist, adds colour and, importantly, tons of flavour.

- 300g veal cushion, cut into 2 steaks
- · 100g plain flour
- · 2 eggs, beaten
- 100g panko breadcrumbs
- 50ml olive oil
- 125g butter
- sea salt and freshly ground black
- pepper

TO SERVE

- · lemon wedges
- watercress
- 1 Place each of the veal steaks between sheets of clingfilm and bash them out with a rolling pin until 1cm thick.
- 2 Season the flour with salt and pepper and add to a shallow bowl. Pour the beaten eggs in another bowl and put the breadcrumbs in a third. Dip each steak first in the seasoned flour, then the egg, then the breadcrumbs, back into the egg and finally the breadcrumbs again.
- 3 In a large non-stick pan, heat the oil and butter over a medium heat. Fry the veal for 2 minutes on each side until golden and crispy. Drain.
- **4** Serve the veal on plates with the foaming butter spooned over the top and lemon wedges and watercress alongside.







Lamb steaks with pumpkin gnocchi and split butter sauce

Bistecca di agnello con gnocchi di zucca e salsa di burro separato

> SERVES 4 > PREPARATION 30 minutes > COOKING 30 minutes

This is a dish I created on my TV show that ended up becoming a dish on my restaurant menu. The key is splitting the sauce with nut-brown butter and jus, which gives a distinct appearance and taste. I like to roast the squash in its skin in a really hot oven. You can use tinned pumpkin purée to make the gnocchi, as it is much simpler, and really good quality baking potatoes.

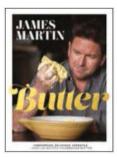
- ½ a squash of your choice (about 400g), sliced
- 50ml olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 4 x 200g lamb steaks
- vegetable oil, for deepfrying
- 1 small bunch of sage, leaves picked
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE GNOCCHI

- 400g cooked potato, pressed through a ricer
- 100g cooked pumpkin, pressed through a ricer
- 125g plain flour, plus extra for rolling
- 2 egg yolks FOR THE SAUCE
- 100ml veal jus
- 1 tsp sherry vinegar
- a squeeze of lemon juice
- 50g butter

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. In an ovenproof pan, fry the squash in the olive oil over a high heat until coloured. Season, then pop in the oven for 5-6 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside.
- 2 Heat the grill to high. Place the lamb onto a baking tray, season, drizzle over a little olive oil and grill for 8 minutes, then rest.
- 3 Put a large pan of water on to boil and make the gnocchi. Mix together the potato, pumpkin, flour and egg yolks, then season. Roll into two 20cm-long sausage shapes, 2cm thick, using a little extra flour. Cut into 3cm pieces, plunge into boiling water for 1 minute, then drain.
- 4 Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat and, once hot, add the veal jus, sherry vinegar and lemon juice. Bring to the boil and add the butter. Stir through the gnocchi and season.
- 5 Heat the vegetable oil in a pan to 180°C (a small piece of bread should brown in it in 15 seconds) and deep-fry the sage leaves for about 30 seconds until translucent.
- 6 To serve, place the sliced squash on a platter, top with the lamb steaks, gnocchi and sauce, then scatter over the crispy sage leaves.

These recipes are taken from *Butter: Comforting, delicious, versatile, over 130 recipes celebrating butter*by James Martin
(Quadrille, RRP £22),
photography by
John Carey



PARMESAN

Parmigiano Reggiano is one of Italy's most prized cheeses. We taste seven slices to find our cheeseboard favourites

n essential ingredient in any keen cook's store cupboard, Parmigiano Reggiano is renowned for its unique flavour and texture and is still produced today more or less as it was nearly 1,000 years ago, using the same ingredients and craftsmanship. A 'protected designation of origin' food, this refers exclusively to Parmigiano Reggiano DOP cheese manufactured in a very specific area of Italy. Authentic Parmesan is only made in the Emilia-Romagna region, and must undergo a lengthy production process to achieve that special granular texture and nutty taste. 'Consorzio'

inspectors regularly check the cheeses after 12 months to ensure quality criteria are met. Our samples are aged from 12 to 36 months, including a vegetarian rennet option that really passes muster.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

WAITROSE NO.1 PARMIGIANO REGGIANO DOP

From Waitrose www.waitrose.com

Price £4.50 for 220g (£22.50/kg)

From the Waitrose premium No.1 range, this Parmigiano Reggiano DOP is selected from cheeses produced by a single dairy in Emilia-Romagna. Made from raw cow's milk and aged for 30 months, this is indeed a premium product, but at a surprisingly good price for a cheese of this maturity. Under the paper outer, there is a plastic wrap, but once unwrapped and left at room temperature, it easily crumbled into chunks. Rich and tangy with a delicious granular texture, this cheese has a great depth of nutty flavour and a bright, clean taste that lingers on the palate. The obvious complement to a glass of fine Italian bubbles, this is definitely not a cheese to cook with, as its would lose its standout characteristics. Try it freshly grated on a risotto, pasta or salad instead. (Ed's top tip:





From Co-op
www.coop.co.uk

Price £3.00/170g; £17.45/kg
Matured for 18 months, this
well-priced supermarket
Parmesan was buttery-yellow
with a satisfying crunch and
tangy flavour that developed
on the palate in a very
pleasing way. It crumbled well
too at room temperature.

VERDICT ★★★★

Definitely one to keep for the table rather than for cooking with, the flavour and texture belied its well-placed price point.

2 OCADO PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

From Ocado
www.ocado.com
Price £3.45/200g; 17.15/kg
At the younger end of the
maturity scale, this 12-month
aged cheese is paler in
colour than its more mature
counterparts and has a
smooth creaminess, rather
than a crumbly texture.

VERDICT ★★★

Mild and well-balanced, this young Parmesan is one to cook with. Its creaminess means it melts well into hot dishes.

VERDICT ★★★★★

use a potato peeler to make fancy curls.)

Mature and rich, this is one sophisticated slice of Parmigiano Reggiano which deserves to be centre stage at *aperitivo* time, dressed with an aged balsamic.







3 GIOVANNI FERRARI PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

From Giovanni Ferrari www.ferrariformaggi.it/
Price £3.40/150g; £22.60/kg
We found this 24-month
Parmigiano Reggiano at
Ocado. Texture-wise, it's
pleasingly grainy and
crumbled into easy chunks
with a mature, nutty flavour.

VERDICT ★★★★

At the higher end of the price range, this is a tasty cheese that sits well alone or grated over your favourite Italian dishes.

4 TESCO PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

From Tesco
www.tesco.com
Price £3.10/200g; £15.50/kg
This Parmesan has been aged
for 24 months, which has
given it a rich pungency and
subtle, crunchy texture, with
a slight creamy feel on the
palate and a savoury flavour
with a hint of nuttiness.

VERDICT ★★★★

A quality Parmesan and the price is great – the texture is excellent and flavour notes shine through on the tongue.

5 M&S PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

From M&S Food
www.marksandspencer.com
Price £4.45/200g; £22.25/kg
From a single dairy, this
24-month-old cheese has
a great texture and an
excellent crumble factor. It
has a pleasing crunch and
resealable packaging to keep
it fresh in the fridge.

VERDICT ★★★★

A pricier choice than the cheese from Tesco option, this has similar characteristics but has even more crunch to it.

6 GRAN KINARA PARMESAN-STYLE

From Vorrei
www.vorrei.co.uk
Price £8.90/250g; £33/kg
Using vegetarian rennet
derived from thistles
(historically cheaper than
traditional rennet) and aged
for 12 months, this pale and
interesting hard cheese is
mild and crumbly, with a
pleasing tang.

VERDICT ★★★★★

We reviewed this tasty cheese four years ago, and in our opinion it still remains the best veggie 'parmesan' on the market.



Simple Mediterranean

These sunny recipes by Claudia Roden will brighten up the dullest day



➤ SERVES 4 ➤ PREPARATION 15 minutes ➤ COOKING 30 minutes

Sweet and sour is one of the tastes the Arabs brought to Sicily in the 9th century AD. This courgette dish is wonderful with ricotta, which is here as a recommended option

- · 3 courgettes (about 800g in total)
- · olive or sunflower oil
- · 100ml white wine vinegar
- 50g sugar
- 1 tbsp dried mint
- salt and black pepper
- · extra-virgin olive oil, to serve
- 1 Preheat the grill to high. Line a baking sheet with foil. Cut each courgette lengthways into 1cm-thick slices. Place them on the foil, brush with oil on both sides and sprinkle lightly with salt. Grill for about 10 minutes, turning them over once, until they are tender and lightly browned in places.
- 2 Heat the vinegar and sugar with the dried mint and some pepper in a small pan over medium heat, stirring
- until the sugar melts, then simmer for a couple of minutes to reduce it a little. Arrange the courgette slices side by side on a serving plate, then pour the vinegar dressing over them and add an extra drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.
- **3** To make whipped ricotta: using a fork, whip 250g ricotta with 1½ tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, the grated zest of half a small lemon, and salt and pepper to taste.







Pea and mint crostini



Crostini con crema di piselli e menta

➤ MAKES 12 ➤ PREPARATION 5 mins ➤ BAKING 10 mins

Peas and mint make such a heavenly combination, especially on top of crunchy crostini. You can use frozen peas if fresh are not in season.

- 10-12 slices of baguette
- 60ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, cut in half
- 250g fresh or frozen peas
- · a handful of fresh mint
- leaves, roughly chopped
- salt, to season
- zest of 1 lemon, to
 - garnish
- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Brush the baguette slices with oil and place on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes until golden and crisp. Remove from the oven and rub lightly with the cut side of the garlic clove.
- 2 If using fresh peas, cook them in boiling salted water for about 3 minutes, drain and pop into a blender. If using frozen, simply defrost and put straight into the blender. Add the remaining oil and whizz to a lightly textured purée. Remove from the blender and stir in the mint, reserving some for the garnish.
- 3 Form the pea mixture into neat quenelles using two teaspoons and top the crostini. Scatter with a little lemon zest and a few extra mint leaves to serve.

Salt cod crostini

Crostini con baccalà

➤ MAKES 12 ➤ PREPARATION 40 mins ➤ COOKING 20 mins

Laced with garlic and speckled with herbs, this salt cod topping is a delight. Note that you need to soak the fish for 48 hours before blending, changing the water often.

- 500g salt cod, soaked for 48 hours
- 570ml whole milk
- · 2 fresh bay leaves
- 1 tbsp black peppercorns
- 2 garlic cloves
- 120ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- a handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 12 slices of baguette, baked
- salt and black pepper, to season
- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place the pre-soaked cod in a large saucepan and pour in the milk. Add the bay leaves, peppercorns, garlic and just enough water to cover the fish
- 2 Set over a medium heat and simmer for 20 minutes, until just cooked. Remove the fish from the milk and strain out the bits and bobs, reserving the milk and the garlic.
- 3 When the fish has cooled a little, to the point where it can be comfortably handled, flake it carefully into the bowl of a food processor or blender, taking care to remove the bones.
- 4 Add half of the olive oil, a little of the reserved milk and the softened garlic and pulse, adding the remaining oil and as much milk as necessary, until the mixture has a similar thickness to creamy mashed potato.
- 5 Stir in the parsley, adjust the seasoning and top the crostini.

Gorgonzola and anchovy crostini with pickled radicchio

Crostini con gorgonzola, acciughe e radicchio rosso in salamoia

➤ MAKES 12 ➤ PREPARATION 10 minutes ➤ COOKING 20 minutes

- 12 slices of baguette
- · 3-4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 300g Gorgonzola cheese
- 12 tinned anchovies
- TO MAKE THE PICKLED RADICCHIO
- 300ml apple vinegar
 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 generous tbsp runny
 1 small, long radicchio,

honey sliced

The sweet and sour flavours of this quick pickled radicchio perfectly offset the Gorgonzola cheese and anchovies, and the colour contrast makes for the prettiest of antipasti.

1 To pickle the radicchio, pour the apple vinegar into a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Boil for a couple of minutes, then add the honey and fennel seeds. Turn the heat down and bubble for 5 minutes. Drop the sliced radicchio into the vinegar, cook for 1 minute, then turn off the heat.

2 After 4-5 minutes, remove the radicchio and fennel seeds with a slotted spoon, transfer to a mixing bowl and cool.

3 Brush the baguette slices with the oil and toast on a hot griddle pan, or in a preheated oven, until golden.

4 Top the crostini with a good dollop of Gorgonzola cheese and add a single anchovy. Garnish with the pickled radicchio and serve.

TIP You could use ready-pickled red cabbage here, but the bitterness of the radicchio makes the extra effort worthwhile

Top the crostini with a good dollop of Gorgonzola cheese and add a single anchovy



Wild mushroom crostini

Crostini ai funghi selvatici

➤ MAKES 40 ➤ PREPARATION 30 minutes ➤ COOKING 30 minutes

Combining three different types of mushroom – porcini, chestnut and chanterelle – in a creamy sauce with a hint of truffle, this crostini topping is simply sublime.

- 40 crostini
- · 30g dried porcini mushrooms
- 200g baby chestnut mushrooms
- 100g chanterelle mushrooms
- 1/2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 5 tsp truffle porcini paste
- · 150ml double cream
- 1 tbsp freshly snipped chives
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 First, make the crostini from baguette slices. As you can see, this can be done in the oven, on a griddle pan or even in a toaster. You can even make them up to a week in advance and keep them in an airtight container. Given that we are making 40 of them in this recipe, that might be a good idea on this occasion as might using a preheated oven rather than a two-slice toaster!
- 2 Soak the porcini mushrooms in just-boiled water for at least 20 minutes, then remove and drain. Meanwhile, slice the fresh mushrooms and then, when they are cool enough to handle, slice the soaked porcini.
- 3 Heat the butter and olive oil in a frying pan over a fairly high heat. Add all the mushrooms and fry for 10 minutes, then add the truffled porcini paste and the cream. Reduce the cream a little, then season to taste.
- 4 Spread the crostini with the creamed mushrooms and top with the chives.

SUBSCRIBE TO ITALIA! TODAY AND SAVE 30%!



CULTURE PEOPLE FOOD WINE PROPERTY

Your USA subscription offer

- Italia! magazine delivered direct to your home so you never miss an issue
- Save 30% and pay only \$33.99 every six months
- Catch up on any back issue or special for less using your 10% discount in the Italia! online store
- Receive travel tips, property advice, and delicious recipes straight to your inbox with our email newsletter
- Enjoy peace of mind with carbon-neutral paper and 100% recyclable packaging

Y@YOUR

How to enjoy your next Italian adventure at home

ITALIAN ESCAPES

48 HOURS IN MAJELLA Explore Abruzzo's unspoilt natural wilderness

DISCOVER THE CHARMS OF HISTORIC URBINO

INTRIGUE IN VENICE When Tintoretto met the monks of San Rocco

THE UK'S AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE ABOUT ITALY On test: the King of Italian cheese

Unst use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code, and easily subscribe with

this special offer now!



OR ORDER

italytravelandlife.com/USA22

- **OFFER CODE: USA22P**
- The saving is calculated from the US cover price, and
- is only available to US subscribers paying by PayPal
- or continuous card payment. There are 6 issues of
- Italia! published every year and you can choose your start issue as the issue on sale now, or an unpublished
- issue in the future. For all terms and conditions, please visit shop.italiamagazine.co.uk/terms.



Get the family together and bring the flavours of Italy right to your table with **Mario Matassa**

Part 1: A Springtime Supper



n a country that loves and lives to eat well and, as a general rule, adheres to cabbe the principle of eating seasonally, it should the roome as no surprise that for spring many Italians spring is the most anticipated time in the culinary calendar. It's partly because we suffer, or at least complain that we do, such long, cold, dark winters.

It is also because, for Italians, spring

symbolises rebirth and renewal, usually with specific reference to the Christian calendar. As food is so closely linked with culture in Italy, the two being practically synonymous in this writer's view, inevitably the seasonal menu is emblematic of life renewed.

So perhaps there's no more fitting a time to launch this new series – Saturday Night In – to celebrate family ties and friendship through sharing food together. And as spring marks the beginning of a new season, so too, and inevitably for Italians, it heralds a new menu. Whilst horticulturalists and keen gardeners will look



to the garden, the trees and the earth for first signs of seasonal change, the average Italian will look to the supermarket shelf. The cabbages, pumpkins and root vegetables, which for months have held a prominent position, are gradually sidelined, giving way to the new arrivals — asparagus, artichokes, baby courgettes, peas, spring onions and baby spinach, amongst others.

THE SEASONAL PRINCIPLE

seasonal spring

vegetables in your

country and think

about the dishes you

like that use them

Overnight, across the peninsula, the Italian menu magically transforms. Instead of minestrone made with dried pulses

and root vegetables, (which I have nothing against!)
light vegetable broths are prepared. Pasta, for months laden with ragù and sauces with dried mushrooms and beans (again these have their place and time) is given a spring makeover. Stews and roasts give way to scallopine (thin, gently sautéed escalopes) and cutlets, and simple fish dishes are back in vogue. Dried herbs are replaced with fresh, and even the dessert trolley is given a seasonal

twist. Most notably, the *panettone*, *pandoro* and *panforte* of the festive and winter seasons are replaced with, amongst others, *colomba*, a traditional Easter cake formed in the shape of a dove.

Having worked as a professional chef in Italy for fifteen years, one of the joys of my work is scouring the market stalls, the very best indicator of seasonal change. And over the years I've been

Text, images and recipes by Mario Matassa



Spring pasta Pasta primavera

- > SERVES 4
- > PREPARATION 10 minutes
- > COOKING 12 minutes



Pasta primavera is a prime example of the principles of Italian cuisine. Pasta, being the most versatile of Italian staples, is well matched to any occasion. Here it is given a spring dressing. I've used asparagus, peas and baby leaf spinach but the options are practically endless. Artichokes, courgettes, green beans and spring onions, for example, all work equally well.

- 320g long pasta, such as spaghetti or linguine
- · 200g fresh asparagus
- · 100g fresh peas, pods removed
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and sliced
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- a good handful of fresh baby spinach leaves
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 free-range eggs (hard-boiled)
- 1 Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add salt and cook the pasta according to the packet instructions until al dente - about 8 minutes.
- 2 In the meantime, cut the thick ends of the asparagus and pod the peas. Slice the garlic and add it to a pan with the olive oil. Heat gently but do not brown the garlic. Add the asparagus and the peas, and toss, coating the vegetables evenly. Add a ladleful of water from the pasta and continue to sauté gently.

3 Once the pasta is cooked, drain, reserving a few tablespoons of the cooking water, and add to the

> vegetables. Add the spinach leaves to the pan, the water from the pasta, a splash of

> > April/May 2022 ITALIA! 75

realisation. That is, good Italian cooking is less about recipes and more about sticking to principles. This series is therefore as much about the principles of Italian cooking as it is about the recipes. The first of these principles, as

working in the kitchen I have come to a

you will probably have guessed, is seasonality. The others follow in logical step. Use the freshest and best ingredients possible and, whenever possible, keep it simple. This is what makes Italian food stand out. It's food to be enjoyed and shared, and it is home cooking.

At its very best, it's prepared in the simplest of fashion, relying first and foremost on the finest and most readily available ingredients. The perfect recipe for an evening shared with friends and family.

Turn the page for the main course and dessert, pictured right, that will follow on from our starter of spring pasta





Pan-fried salmon with toasted pistachio and lemon butter

Salmone con pistacchi tostati e burro al limone

- > SERVES 4
- > PREPARATION 10 minutes
- > COOKING 8 minutes



This dish is simple and takes moments to prepare. Make sure the salmon is fresh and from a sustainable source. It is best served with a light spring salad. I used spinach with grated baby carrots and spring onions, dressed simply with extra-virgin olive oil and a splash of white wine vinegar.

- 4 wild salmon steaks
- · 100g pistachio nuts, shelled
- · 1 unwaxed lemon
- · 50g unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- · salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 First, place a heavy-based frying pan onto the heat. Remove the shells from the nuts and add to the pan. Roll them about for a couple of minutes until they start to toast. Be careful not to burn them. Spoon the nuts onto a cutting board and chop roughly.
- 2 Add the olive oil to the same pan and, once it is hot, add the salmon steaks. Fry the steaks for approximately 4 minutes, depending on their thickness, until you have a crisp golden colour, then turn them over and fry them for a further 3 to 4 minutes on the other side.
- 3 Remove the steaks to a warmed plate while you make the sauce. Grate the lemon rind onto a plate and cut the lemon in half. Add the butter to the pan and, when it has melted, add the pistachio nuts. Squeeze the lemon juice into the pan.
- **4** Arrange the salmon steaks on your plates and drizzle over the pistachio butter. Finish with salt and freshly ground black pepper and a sprinkling of lemon rind. Serve with a light salad and warmed ciabatta bread.

PURATO

FINISHING TOUCHES...

➤ THE WINI

A crisp dry rosé for the salmon, and prosecco with the cake!

➤ THE TABLE

Traditional mimosa to celebrate International Women's Day

➤ THE MUSIC

Perhaps the Spring concerto from Vivaldi's Four Seasons

'Cheat's' Mimosa cake Torta primavera 'furba'

- ➤ MAKES one approximately 22cm cake
- ➤ **PREPARATION** 20 minutes, plus chilling time for the cream
- > BAKING 10 minutes

This cake is an amalgamation of two cakes synonymous with the season: Mimosa and Colomba (which means 'dove'). Mimosa cake first made an appearance to mark International Women's Day on the 8th of March (Festa della Donna in Italy). It's so called because the cake resembles the yellow mimosa flower, which is traditionally used to symbolise the occasion. Colomba is an aromatic yeasted cake shaped like a dove. I call this my 'cheat's' cake because rather than bake the sponge to make Mimosa, I've used a Colomba as the base (widely available in supermarkets). It's the perfect cake for those occasions when time is short!

FOR THE CAKE

 1 Colomba cake (alternatively, panettone or pandoro work equally well)

FOR THE CREAM

- · 300ml whole milk
- · 2 medium free-range egg yolks
- · 1 heaped tbsp plain flour
- · 2 tbsp caster sugar
- · 250ml cream
- icing sugar to serve



- 1 To make the cream, gently heat the milk, but do not boil. While the milk is heating, whisk the egg yolks together with flour and sugar in a bowl. Add a little of the warm milk to the egg mixture and stir well. Then add the egg mixture to the rest of the milk and heat until gently boiling, stirring all the time. Cook for a few minutes until the cream thickens. Set aside to cool completely. Once cold, whip the cream until stiff and fold into the patisserie cream.
- 2 When the cream is cool you can start assembling the cake. Remove the packaging from the Colomba cake. Place the cake on a large cutting board and place a round cake tin centrally over the top. With a sharp knife, carefully cut around the tin, pressing down into the cake as you cut. Set aside the trimmings for later. Carefully slice the crust off the top of the cake, then proceed to slice three even layers. Then, cut the trimmings into small cubes.
- 3 Put the first layer onto a serving plate and spread evenly with the cream. Repeat this for the second layer. Add the third layer and spread the remaining cream over the top and the sides. Press the trimmings over the top and around the sides, sprinkle with icing sugar and serve.

TIP Put the Colomba cake trimmings in an airtight container and they will keep for several days, or until somebody finds them.



rurato Kose, around ±10, www.ocado.com

QUICK CONVERTER

We know that many of you may prefer to use imperial or US **weights and measures** to cook our recipes – use our handy conversion tables to translate from metric

WEIGHT

¹ /40Z	
½0Z	
1oz	
1³/40Z	
2³/40Z	
3½0Z	
5½0Z	
6oz	
7oz	
8oz	
9oz	
9³/40Z	
10½0z	
12oz	
13oz	
14oz	
15oz	
1lb	
1lb 1oz	
1lb 6oz	
1lb 7oz	
2lb 2oz	
2lb 8oz	
3lb 3oz	
4lb 4oz	
5lb	
5lb 5oz	
6lb 6oz	
7lb 2oz	
7lb 7oz	

SIZE

3mm	∜≀in		
5mm	1/4in		
1cm	½in		
2cm	³ / ₄ in		
2.5cm	1in		
3cm	11/4in		
4cm	1½in		
5cm	2in		
6cm	2½in		
7cm	2³/₄in		
8cm	31/4in		
9cm	3½in		
10cm	4in		
12cm	4½in		
15cm	6in		
17cm	6½in		
18cm	7in		
20cm	8in		
23cm	9in		
24cm	9½in		
25cm	10in		
30cm	12in		
35cm	13½in		
40cm	15½in		

OVEN TEMPERATURES

Celsius	Fahrenheit	Gas	Description
110°C	225°F	1/4	cool
130°C	250°F	1/2	cool
140°C	275°F	1	very low
150°C	300°F	2	very low
170°C	325°F	3	low
180°C	350°F	4	moderate
190°C	375°F	5	moderate/hot
200°C	400°F	6	hot
220°C	425°F	7	hot
230°C	455°F	8	very hot
For fan-ass	isted ovens reduce	temperati	ure by 20°C (35°F)

AMERICAN CUPS					
Butter					
1 cup	225g	8oz			
Flour					
1 cup	130g	4½0Z			
White s	ugar				
1 cup	200g	7oz			
Dried pa	asta				
1 cup	100g	3½0Z			
Liquid					
1 cup	250ml	8fl oz			
½ cup	120ml	4fl oz			
-23					

VOLUME

1.25ml	¼ tsp	
2.5ml	½ tsp	
5ml	1 tsp	12
15ml	1 tbsp	
30ml	1fl oz	
50ml	2fl oz	
100ml	3½fl oz	
150ml	5fl oz	¼ pint
200ml	7fl oz	⅓ pint
300ml	10fl oz	½ pint
500ml	18fl oz	
600ml	20fl oz	1 pint
700ml		1¼ pint
850ml		1½ pints
1 litre		1³/₄ pints
1.2 litres		2 pints





OLD GRAPES, NEW WINES

If you're looking for something interesting to drink this spring, look no further than our selection from sunny Sicily, an island which produces impressive **red and white** wines

Sicily, Italy's largest island, is perfectly situated off the toe of the boot, in the warm waters of the Mediterranean. With its diverse geology – including substantial swathes of fertile volcanic soil – and very warm climate, it is well-placed for wine production. Even before the Greeks brought their more sophisticated winemaking techniques to the island in the 8th century BC, records show that Sicilian viticulture existed. In total its spans more than 4,000 years.

Winemakers have made strong efforts since the 1980s to transform the perception of their wines

Dusting off their poor reputation, Sicilian winemakers have made strong efforts since the 1980s to transform the perception of their wines – from 'cheap and cheerful' to 'worth consideration' for discerning restaurants, as well as for the savvy personal consumer. With 23 DOC and one DOCG, Sicily's appellation wines are produced in specific areas across the island – though you'll also see wines with the broader Terre Siciliane IGT and Sicilia DOC on the shelves. We have chosen from the most popular grape varieties to suit all budgets: the versatile and fruity Nero d'Avola, on its own and blended into a sumptuous Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG with the red-berried juiciness of Frappato. We also present a pure Frappato from an ancient estate, plus zippy Catarratto, Grecanico and Vermentino whites.



Prices correct at time of printing













DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

FEUDO DI SANTA TRESA FRAPPATO 2018

From Santa Tresa www.santatresa.com Price £10.00 (from Ocado)

The 17th-century Santa Tresa estate near Vittoria in southeast Sicily is owned by Stefano Girelli and his sister Marina, and the vines are cultivated as naturally as possible. This indigenous Frappato is light and vibrant, brimming with sweet red berries and balanced by sharp pomegranate and a hint of pepper. Excellent value.



GREAT WITH...

Traditionally served lightly chilled, serve this with simple fish dishes, mature cheese or *pasta alla Norma*.

SALVATORE TAMBURELLO '797' CATARRATTO, SICILIA DOC 2019

From Independent Wine www.independent.wine Price £18.95

From grapes grown in the Belice river valley in southwest Sicily, this Catarratto is unfiltered with a soft, hazy appearance. The tiny particles in the wine bring a real intensity to its flavour – bursting with orange blossom aromas and plenty of sun-ripened fruit on the palate, the sweetness is tempered by a tangy hit of lemon and ginger on the finish. Serve chilled.

DONNAFUGATA FLORAMUNDI CERASUOLO DI VITTORIA DOCG

From Vinissimus www.vinissimus.co.uk
Price £18.20

Donnafugata have always been champions of native Sicilian grape varieties. Cerasuolo di Vittoria is the only Sicilian DOCG and combines the power of Vittoria-grown Nero d'Avola (60 per cent) and aromatic Frappato (40 per cent) to create this elegant, balanced red. It has a nose of black cherries and berries, with more dark fruit on the palate and a twist of pepper.





Pan-fried scallops, braised octopus or lemon and ricotta ravioli.



GREAT WITH...

A duck ragù, chargrilled tuna or baked stuffed aubergines.

PLANETA ALASTRO BIANCO SICILIA DOC 2020

From The Great Wine Co. www.greatwine.co.uk
Price £18.95

Planeta is a well-known
Sicilian winery and produces
a delightfully varied range
of wines from its vineyards
dotted around the island.
This aromatic Alastro is
mainly Grecanico with a
small dash of Grillo and
Sauvignon Blanc. It has
plenty of tropical fruit on
the nose with even more ripe
mango and melon on the
palate, tempered by a hint
of almond and a balanced
minerality in the long finish.

THE SOCIETY'S SICILIAN RESERVE RED 2018

From The Wine Society www.thewinesociety.co.uk
Price £8.50

The substantial estate of Feudo Arancio is based on the windswept southern coast of Sicily. It has two large vineyard areas, covering almost 700 hectares in total, situated at Sambuca di Sicilia in the west and Ragusa in the east. 100 per cent Nero d'Avola, this characterful red packs a punch at 13.5 ABV and is full of fruity flavour, with powerful cherry and bramble aromas and plenty of dark stone fruit on the palate.

MARKS & SPENCER VERMENTINO TERRE SICILIANE 2020

From Marks & Spencer www.marksandpsencer.com Price £6.50

Made by winemaker Domenico De Gregorio for Marks & Spencer, this Vermentino is an easy-drinking wine at an easy-going price. Perfect for a party or a midweek moment, it's a delightfully crisp white with a bouquet of lemon and peach. It's certainly lighter bodied, but packs enough fruity flavour with melon and a citrus snap on the palate to deliver a nicely balanced finish.







GREAT WITH...

Enjoy on its own, with freshly grilled seabass or a shellfish platter.

GREAT WITH...

Char-grilled rib of beef, a well-aged parmesan or tangy blue cheese.

GREAT WITH...

Serve well-chilled with grissini as an aperitivo or with roast chicken.

NEXT MONTH IN Taste ITALIA!

CookITALIA!

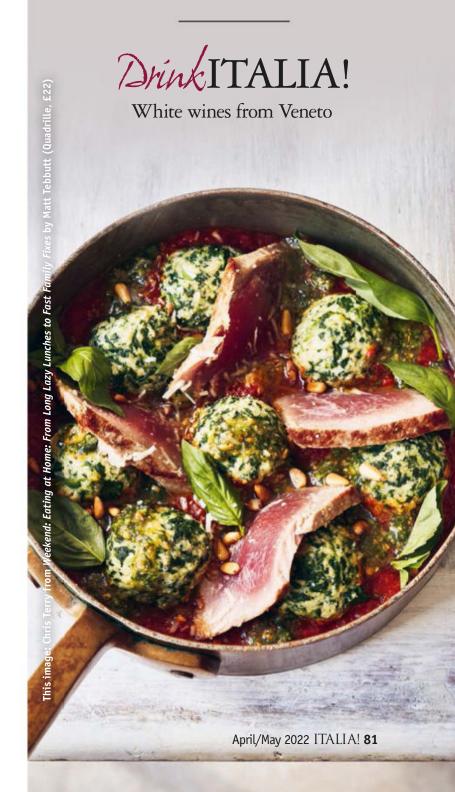
Weekend Mood
Relaxed recipes for days off

Full of Beans

Make more of pulses and grains

Saturday Night In
Easy Italian dining





HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY RENTALS



01273 251112

Your holiday starts here

www.pugliaholidayrentals.com

Find us on Instagram: @italia_magazine Follow us on Twitter: @ItaliaMag

Sunflower Publishing

Writers' retreat in Abruzzo

- 1 week, all-inclusive
- Accommodation in country house with pool, 15 minutes from the sea
- Interactive morning workshops on creative writing and self-publishing
- Q & A sessions with celebrity authors
- Arrive with an empty page or work in progress – all are welcome

For more details please go to the website: www.sunflowerpublishing.com



MARKE





SERVICES



☎ +44 (0)20 7193 0290 enquiries@leplaw.co.uk www.leplaw.co.uk LEP Law, Victory House, 99-101 Regent Street, London W1B 4EZ



OFFICES IN ROME & PADOVA - ITALY TEL: +39 049 7994547 / 06 6788297 EMAIL: INFO@DEBENETTILAW.COM WWW.DEBENETTILAW.COM







Complete pool and garden maintenance services. Property Maintenance and Management. Advertising and booking services.

All your property needs in one place.

for more information www.pugliapoolsandgardens.com or call Chris on **20039 393 215 8114**

PROPERTY





Missing an issue? Order direct from us today!







ORDER NOW

italytravelandlife.com/singleissue Or call us on +44 (0)1371 853 609

Living ITALIA!

Look no further for expert Italian property advice and properties for sale

HomesITALIA!

Living in Le Marche
This unspoilt central region
has great house-buying
opportunities

p84

What's new for 2022

Two Le Marche property experts look at the local prospects

p94

Property Showcase

Our round-up of top properties for sale around Italy this month

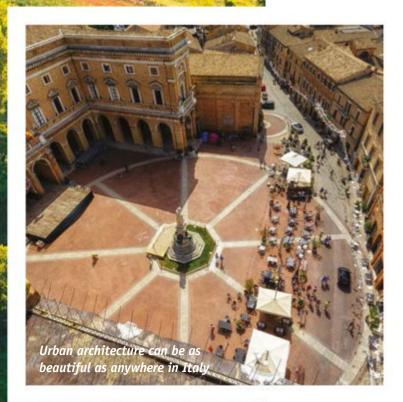
p96

12 pages of expert advice and properties

Le Marche offers a slower pace and great quality of life, see overleaf









Living in Le Muche

This unspoilt region of pretty hills, golden beaches and mystical mountains is much loved by foreign buyers. It's still an excellent choice for a country home in Italy, says **Fleur Kinson**

iewed on a map, Le Marche is the calf muscle of the Italian leg. And it squeezes an astonishing diversity of landscapes into one small area. The region's eastern edge is a long line of clean, honeygold beaches lapped by the warm Adriatic Sea. Head inland and you enter a tranquil world of green and gold hills crowned with handsome old towns and villages. Toward the region's western edge, the hills bristle into wooded mountains with arresting vistas and wonderful hiking trails.

If you love big-city glitz, Le Marche isn't for you. This is a spacious, rural place of pretty countryside and friendly little towns. The quality of life here is sky high and the crime rate is rock bottom. Despite having no heavy industry, Le Marche's has very low unemployment, with many people involved in the traditional manufacturing of artisan goods and foodstuffs. The region's inhabitants are a relaxed, prosperous bunch. Yet for all its rural peacefulness, Le Marche is certainly no remote backwater. The transport infrastructure is very good and it's easy to get from place to place.

With its unspoilt landscapes and attractive buildings, it's no surprise that Le Marche has been a big hit with foreign buyers ever since it burst onto the international property

scene twenty years ago. Since then the region has regularly been highly placed in a great many international surveys of the best places in the world to live or retire.

CURRENT MARKET

As a rough guide to prices today in Le Marche, you might get a rustic ruin for €50,000-€100,000,

AT A GLANCE...

➤ THE REGION

Le Marche is located on Italy's central eastern coast. The main neighbours are Emilia-Romagna, Umbria and Abruzzo; the border also briefly kisses Tuscany and Lazio. Landscapes unfurl between the sparkling blue Adriatic and the majestic Apennine mountains. The coast is a long line of clean, golden beaches meeting warm, shallow water. Inland, the terrain rises to form an undulating world of green and sun-blonded hills. In the west, the land climbs higher into the wooded Apennines and their exceptionally beautiful little offshoot, the Sibillini Mountains.

➤ THE CLIMATE

Temperate, with warm-hot summers but no real dry season. Winters in the uplands can be cold.

> THE CULTURE

Ducal palaces and museums abound. Grand master Raphael and architect Bramante were born in Urbino. Pesaro is the birthplace of Rossini.

LIVING ITALIA!



ITALIA!

DREAM HOME

Marche

CASA LA LOGGIA

Type of property Fully restored farmhouse Number of bedrooms 4 Price **€439,000** Location Colmurano, Macerata Contact Kevin Gibney, **Property For Sale Marche ☎** +39 347 538 6668 info@propertyforsalemarche.com www.propertyforsalemarche.com

Outstanding fully restored Marche farmhouse. Classic stone exterior and spectacular arched loggia. 4 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms. Garage. Wood-fired pizza oven. Outstanding views and big olive grove with 80-plus trees. Walk 250m to the restaurant, 1km to an excellent hill-town. Under 35 minutes to the coast and just 30 minutes to the mountains. Sits adjacent to the vineyard of a renowned winemaker. Excellent location. Priced right.



CASA RILASSATI

Type of property Fully restored farmhouse Number of bedrooms 4 Price **€379,000** Location Pontano, Macerata Contact Kevin Gibney, **Property For Sale Marche ☎** +39 347 538 6668 info@propertyforsalemarche.com www.propertyforsalemarche.com

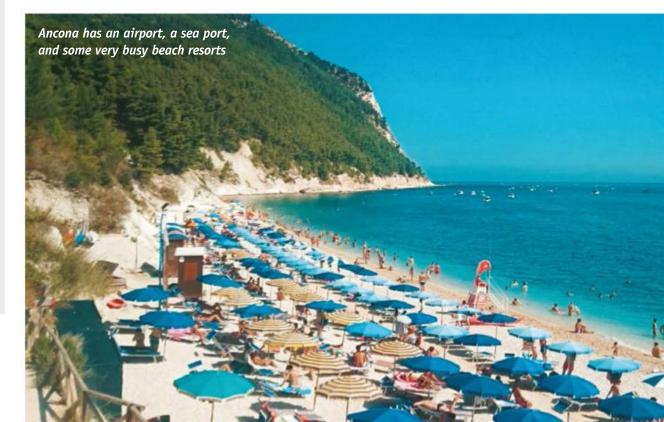
Classic, simple, right-sized and fully restored Marche farmhouse. Stone exterior. Well appointed interior. 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. Attached annex can add a 5th bedroom and 4th bathroom. Private five-acre plot with classic views and big olive grove. 5 minutes to excellent hill-town, under 40 minutes to the coast, 25 minutes to the mountains. Excellent potential for year-round holiday and rental use.

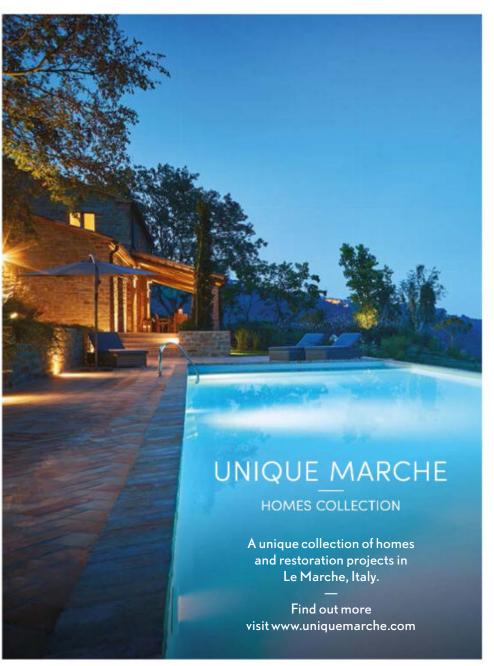


with the best choice of these getting going at about €500,000.

As you might expect, the property market in Le Marche has seen some very erratic activity since the onset of the Covid pandemic. Monica Bruni of Monica Bruni Real Estate notes that, "The market started up again very quickly and accelerated immediately after each of the various lockdowns, then it slowed again when the omicron variant arrived." As well as the usual Dutch, Belgian, British and American clientele, Monica notes that, "The novelty is that many Italians have also bought, with those people coming mainly from the highly urbanised areas of northern Italy – a typical 'race for space' reaction to Covid restrictions."

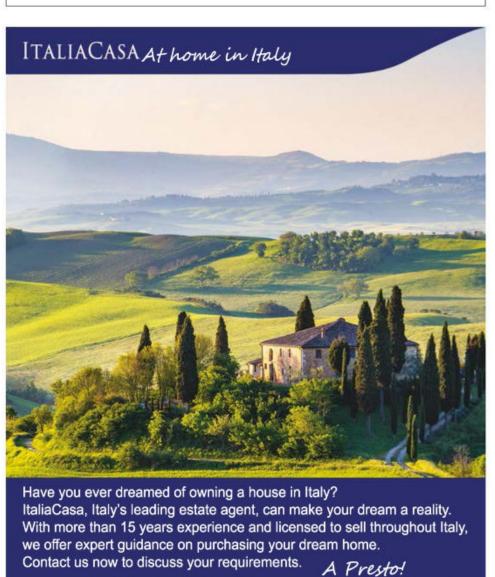
Adam Hall of Unique Marche notes that the kind of properties people are buying has also changed. "The demand for completely restored or turn-key properties has increased dramatically," he says. "Clients now want a quicker process from purchase to move-in. Covid has created a desire not to wait any longer." This increased demand for ready-restored homes also reflects the fact that the cost of restoring is currently higher than it used to be. Adam advises that, "The best thing is to be able to alter the final layout and finishing materials of a property that is structurally sound."











WWW.ITALIACASA.NET

LE MARCHE REGIONAL GUIDE



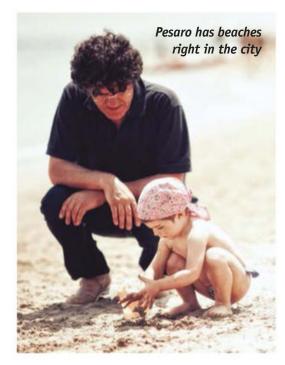
The walled city of Urbino is remarkable for its Renaissance architecture, not least the Palazzo Ducale

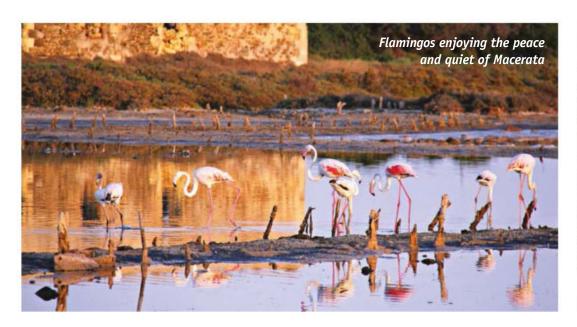
INTRODUCTION

Le Marche lies on the eastern side of Italy, between majestic mountains and inviting sea. The region is split into five provinces: Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno and Fermo. Its proximity to both mountains and sea makes it very appealing to homebuyers.

Its Adriatic coastline stretches some 180km and includes some of the best Italian Blue Flag beaches, while the steep eastern slopes of the Apennines include the stunning Monti Sibillini in the south. The main autostrada, the A14, and the state highway SS16 run swiftly along the coast, but further inland they are slower as they weave up and down the region's hills. The intercity train connections at Ancona link the region with Bologna and Rome. Ancona is also the site of Le Marche's international airport, which is served by Ryanair from London Stansted.

Le Marche boasts 13 protected areas, forests and nature reserves, including the Monti Sibillini and the National Park at Monte Conero on the coast near Ancona. Historically, Le Marche has a remarkable historical heritage too, with its medieval hilltop towns and villages and more than 30 significant archaeological sites and 200 Romanesque churches, as well as the Renaissance city of Urbino.







THE COAST

1 The coast of Le Marche stretches from Pesaro to San Benedetto del Tronto, past sandy beaches and numerous small seaside towns and villages. The region can boast one of the highest number of Blue Flag beaches of any region in Italy. Ancona sits almost half way down the coast and is the administrative capital, and a busy port. With its Greek heritage there are many interesting styles of architecture. A lot of the coastal resorts are relatively small and retain a certain old-fashioned charm. The largest seaside resort is **Pesaro**, in the north, which is bursting with good shops and restaurants. Famous for being the birthplace of Gioachino Rossini, the town has an annual Opera Festival.

Senigallia, a little further south, is known as the 'Velvet Beach' with its 13km of soft, golden sand. The **Conero Riviera** offers the jewel of Portonovo with its Napoleonic fort, idyllic Sirolo and its spectacular golf course, and the Liberty-style architecture of **Porto San Giorgio**. Continue down the coast for **Pedaso**, which hosts a famous mussel festival, **Cupra Marittima** and its imposing castle, and **Grottammare** with its medieval old town. Finally you come to San Benedetto del Tronto, the second largest resort after Pesaro. The fishing port is very busy in the summer with its pretty promenades and vibrant nightlife. The coast itself might be expensive for property, but it's easy to get there from the nearby inland towns.

THE HINTERLAND

2 Move inland from the coast and you will find the rolling hills and open fields of farming country, a peaceful landscape punctuated by pretty hilltop towns and gentle valleys. The quieter environment and slower pace of life make this is a popular area for British buyers. One of the region's most eminent cities is Urbino. It rivals Florence for cultural significance and the more compact, bustling city has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Further south, the hill town of **Macerata** boasts one of Europe's most outstanding outdoor theatres, the Arena Sferisterio, built in the 19th century to resemble an ancient Roman arena. The Stagione Lirica musical festival is held here every summer.

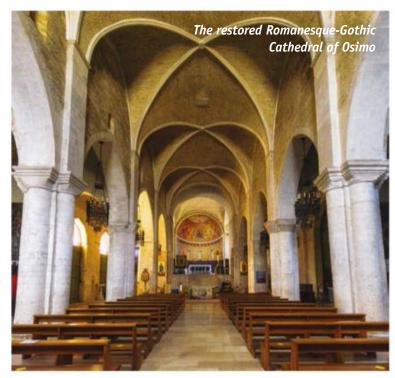
Close to the border with Abruzzo, the ancient town of **Ascoli Piceno** takes its name from the Picene tribe, who were conquered by the Romans in 89BC. The city was once a stop on the Via Salaria (the salt route) from Rome, but now enjoys a quieter existence. With one of the most beautiful marble-paved *piazze* in Italy, and a wealth of medieval architecture, there's plenty to enjoy.

Many other villages dot the landscape, including **Arcevia** (to the west of Ancona) perched on the foothills and surrounded by historic castles; Offida in the south with its unusual triangular *piazza* and memorable *vin santo*; and medieval **Jesi**, near Ancona, with its castle, cobbled streets and world-famous Verdicchio wines.

THE MOUNTAINS

3 The Monti Sibillini National Park was created in 1993 when 700sqm of mountainous wilderness was set aside as a site of outstanding natural beauty. Rising to more than 2,000m, this is a popular destination for naturalists, skiers in winter and walkers in the summer. The mountains form the border with Umbria to the west and the highest peak is Mount Vettore, at 2,476m.

The area is dotted with medieval towns and criss-crossed with walking trails. There is shelter at the network of *rifugi* (mountain huts) across the range and all the maps and guides you need to plan your routes can be found at the Casa del Parco visitor centres. Popular nearby towns include **Amandola** with stunning views of the mountains, and **Force**, famed for its artisans and wrought iron work.



LIVING ITALIA!



CASA LAURINA, TOLENTINO

Type of property Restoration project

Number of bedrooms TBD

Price €79,000

Location Tolentino, Macerata

Contact Unique Marche ☎ +44 (0)7957 659 142

adam@uniquemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com

An ancient, honey-coloured property comprising two buildings built of stone and brickwork at the end of a winding white road. A stunning canvas crying out for completion to your own requirements. An extraordinary view of the mountains, yet proximity to the historical centre of Tolentino makes this a great investment. The plot consists of over 4,000 sqm of land and the buildings extend over 416 sqm (square meterage that could be increased, or even reduced). A fantastic refurbishment opportunity that the team at Unique Marche can help you transform in to your dream Le Marche retreat.



DREAM HOME

project in

CASA MANON, SAN GINESIO

Type of property **Restoration project**Number of bedrooms **5**Price **€110,000**

Location San Ginesio, Macerata

Contact Unique Marche ☎ +44 (0)7957 659 142

adam@uniquemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com

A wonderful opportunity to design a completely new structure using local natural stone. Casa Manon enjoys a dominant position with far-reaching views to the south and west. Found at the end of a winding white road and sufficiently set back to guarantee peace and solitude, it remains close to nearby towns and services and those critical supplies of local wine, cheese and olives. The current structure has a footprint of 290 sqm (in addition to possible loggias or pergolas) surrounded by more than 10,000 sqm of land which we can landscape to include terraces, pool, barbecue areas and more.



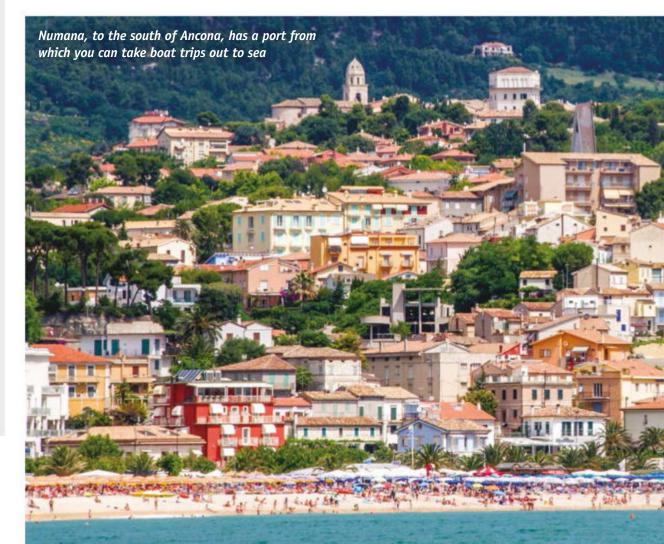
And what of the effect of Britain's exit from the European Union? Monica Bruni says, "Until June 2016, most of the buyers in Le Marche were English. Now the psychological and practical sense of exclusion from Europe has led many British people to feel perplexed about investing abroad." She has seen much lower numbers of British buyers post-Brexit, though they are still coming.

A SENSE OF PLACE

In a region offering such a diversity of landscapes, you'll need to know what's where and how the market goes from place to place. Let's look a little more closely at Le Marche's various parts. If you love the sea and beaches, Le Marche's coast offers

lots of long stretches of clean golden sand backed by family-friendly beach resorts. There's are plenty of nice modern-built apartments in and around the beach towns, generally going for between €100,000 and €250,000. You can find older properties and townhouses too. Summer holiday rental prospects are excellent all along the coast.

Properties within a dozen miles of the sea are likely to cost at least





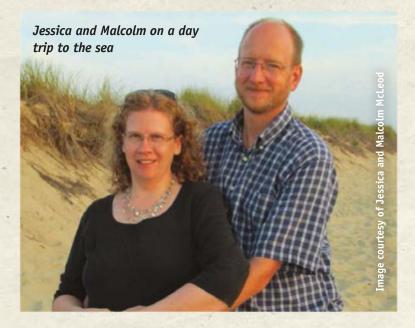
ten percent more than similar-sized homes in most areas further inland, so you might want to consider buying somewhere between about fifteen and thirty miles from the sea. You'll be at a higher elevation here, and likely to have great views down to the bright blue Adriatic in one direction and up to the mountains in the other. The hills of inland Le Marche have no shortage of very charming small towns and villages, and the countryside all around is extremely pretty.

Further west, Le Marche's hills buckle into the majestic Apennine Mountains and, in the south of the region, into the particularly beautiful Sibillini Mountains. Both ranges are only moderately high, making them impressive but not forbidding – in short, a hiking paradise. These higher-altitude parts of Le Marche are generally the region's cheapest areas for property.

MORE ON LOCATION

Because of travel connections, different nationalities of foreign buyer are often drawn to slightly different areas of Italy. This holds true in Le Marche, with Dutch and Belgian buyers often favouring the north of the region because they can drive from home to there, and Brits and Americans favouring the southern half of the region because they'll be flying into Ancona and can easily head down from there to the popular southern provinces of Macerata, Fermo and Ascoli Piceno, with their lovely countryside and





OUR LIFE IN LE MARCHE

Edinburgh-based Jessica and Malcolm McLeod own a two-bedroom country house in southern Le Marche, about twenty miles from the sea and fifteen miles from the town of Amandola on the edge of the Sibillini Mountains. They spend a month at the house every summer as well as a fortnight in the spring and the autumn. They make the place available to friends and family at all other times and are considering offering holiday rentals from the end of 2022 onwards.

What drew them to Italy, and to Le Marche in particular? "We came late to the party," Jessica explains. "Neither of us had been to Italy until about fourteen years ago, when Malcolm's brother David bought a house in Le Marche and we went out to visit him there. Of course, our eyes were opened immediately and we kicked ourselves for not having visited this wonderful country any sooner. David was a great guide and took us to lots of different places in and around Le Marche. We simply loved them all. We became inspired by his experience of buying a house in Italy and were encouraged by how well it had gone for him. He'd had a very helpful estate agent and some great builders. It wasn't long before Malcolm and I started looking for a place of our own.

"Our house sits on a hillside overlooking two villages. Beyond them, we can see the Adriatic in the distance, and from the other side of the house we can see the Sibillini Mountains. I don't think either of us will ever get tired of those views; we love watching how the light and colours change at different times of the day. We eat most of our meals outside on the patio, but there's a large farmhouse-style kitchen inside if there's ever a cold day or rain while we're visiting in the autumn. There are two bedrooms, a lovely big living room, a little study-cum-office room and a bathroom. It's not a huge house, but it's more than enough for what we need. It was in very good condition when we bought it, having been fully restored by the previous owner, so we didn't have to do anything to it other than paint a couple of walls in the colours we liked.

"Le Marche is a very civilised and sophisticated sort of place, despite how rural it is. There's a wonderful quality of life here, lots to see and do, and the people are just delightful. I'd recommend the region to anyone. We've been very warmly welcomed by everyone we've met here and now have lots of local friends. They don't mind at all when we mispronounce Italian words or get our grammar wrong!"

LIVING ITALIA!



FIVE ECO VILLAS

Type of property New-build 'Eco' country houses Number of bedrooms 3, 4, 5 Price Between €245,000 and €390,000 Location Petritoli, Fermo Contact Jane Smith, Magic Marche

→ +39 331 381 9509 jane@magicmarche.com www.magicmarche.com

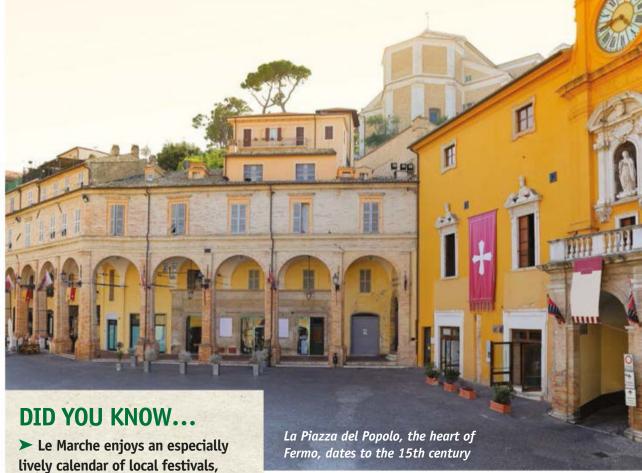
Situated in the rural heart of Le Marche and overlooking beautiful countryside, these exclusive villas will be ready for occupation in 2022. Each will be highly energy efficient and built to the highest modern structural and thermal standards. A mechanical ventilation system fully controls the energy efficient heating, cooling and air conditioning while photovoltaic panels provide the zero cost electricity. The villas will be finished to include all sanitary ware, wall and floor finishes and the kitchens prepared for the new owner to install their preferred kitchen units. Ref. 746



VILLA LAURETTA

Type of property Restored country house Number of bedrooms 5 Price **€395,000** Location Monterubbiano, Le Marche Contact Jane Smith, Magic Marche ☎ +39 331 381 9509 jane@magicmarche.com www.magicmarche.com

Originally a noble's residence dating from 1739, this outstanding property, with sea view, has been carefully restored whilst retaining many original features including traditional cotto and tiled flooring and high oak beamed ceilings. The house comprises three storeys and contains two separate apartments. The larger apartment (135 sqm) is on the upper garden level and has high frescoed ceilings. There is an open plan living/dining room, three double bedrooms - all with lovely country views and one with a south facing balcony, and bathroom with shower. Ref. 737



which means there's always something fun and colourful going on somewhere. Towns and villages seem to compete in throwing the biggest party. Expect costumes, pageantry, music, fireworks, dancing, horse-riders, fire-eaters, puppets, jousting, processions, flowers and endless food and wine. Italians have a great gift for organising outdoor communal fun, and this is perhaps nowhere more abundantly apparent than in Le Marche. There are festivals dedicated to opera, jazz, white truffles, olive oil, medieval crafts, Celtic mysticism, busking, vin cotto, grass peas, fried stuffed olives, early music, 20th-century Americana - you name it! The summer months see the highest number of festivals, but some take place at other times of the year too.

small towns. Adam Hall of Unique Marche feels that, "The best area, as well as the least expensive, is still the southern part of Le Marche – the provinces of Macerata and Fermo. The most valuable investments down here are when the property is located within a short distance of the Sibillini Mountains."

Monica Bruni of Monica Bruni Real Estate offers another, more general, tip on choosing your location in Le Marche. She highlights the often-overlooked option of buying a home in the heart of one of the region's lovely villages rather than out in nearby countryside. "The new regional administration is paying a lot of attention to the recovery of the

ancient villages," she says, "and has been investing heavily in their historical centres. The pleasure of living in such places is certainly not to be underestimated."

HOLIDAY RENTALS

Many holiday homebuyers aim to rent their property out when they're not enjoying it themselves, and this is very doable in Le Marche as the region keeps going from strength to strength as a holiday destination. You can easily fill all of July and August with rental clientele in coastal areas, but you'd also get very good levels of rental attention anywhere inland within about forty minutes of the sea – and pretty good attention too in the most popular parts of the mountains. Inland areas can attract visitors in spring and autumn as well as in the summer.

It's not hard to understand why so many visitors are drawn to Le Marche, nor why so many foreign buyers want a home here – either as a holiday home or a permanent home to retire to. As Adam Hall says, "Le Marche is a region that has it all – sea, countryside mountains and heritage combined with wonderful local traditions of culture and cuisine."

USEFUL CONTACTS

www.casatravella.com www.italiacasa.net www.magicmarche.com www.monicabrunirealesate.com www.propertyforsalemarche.com www.uniquemarche.com







Predictions for the 2022 property market in Le Marche

To support our Living in Le Marche feature this issue, we asked two experts in the field, **Kevin Gibney** and **Robert Hofsteede**, to share their thoughts on where the market is headed this year

Property For Sale Marche Marche Properties... Buy, Restore & More



KEVIN GIBNEYPROPERTY FOR SALE MARCHE www.propertyforsalemarche.com

f the last two years have taught us anything, it's to not be surprised at being surprised – and,

that the best laid plans for the future can always change. Those thoughts capture the essence of what took place in the real estate market here in Le Marche in 2021, and point to what is likely to happen in 2022. In short, Covid is a catalyst for real estate sales in Le Marche.

While expectations were very low given the circumstances, the reality turned out to be very different, with significantly above average interest and sales levels. As clients have explained to us, the sudden turn of events prompted them to start actually doing

We're happy to report that while demand is significantly up, prices have remained stable

what they'd always just talked about. Hence, many clients have decided to buy and to start enjoying life more now, instead of waiting for some far-off future. Many others cited the possibility of moving temporarily to Le Marche to enjoy being outside in the fresh air and working remotely from their properties, while knowing that Le Marche's highly rated health system was there if needed. All early indications in 2022 are for more of the same, if not on an accelerated basis. We're happy to report that while demand is significantly up, prices have remained stable.

MY FAVOURITE PART OF LE MARCHE

While everyone can cite and vigorously defend their choice of favourite place, mine is clearly the province of Macerata. It's at the centre of the region. It has easy access to mountains and beaches with a central *superstrada* that takes you east/west. This also opens up the unique possibility of getting into Umbria with ease,



Image © Property For Sale Marche

Top and bottom:
The Le Marche
countryside is
typified by rolling
hills and neatly
tended vineyards

Left: Casa La
Loggia in Macerata
is a fully restored
farmhouse in the
classic Le Marche
style complete with
olive grove

something other provinces can't do. Most places in the province are about an hour from the nearest airport. The hill-towns are closely spaced and the landscape is what the locals call *dolce*, being a mix of rolling hills and sunflower fields. The food, wine and ambience are outstanding. The people are a joy to know and live amongst. Plus, in any national surveys on quality of life, Macerata always rates number one among Marche provinces on a broad array of measures, including the environment, infrastructure, health system, low crime rates, sports and recreation.

So, while you can't go wrong anywhere in Le Marche, you can't do better than the province of Macerata.



ITALIACASA At home in Staly



ROBERT HOFSTEEDE ITALIACASA LE MARCHE www.italiacasa.nl

f we look at our sales figures for 2021 in Le Marche we see a stronger than ever

uptick in sales. I never have seen such a strong increase in sales since I started 20 years ago. Admittedly, sales of second homes in Italy are also better than ever in other parts of the country where we (ItaliaCasa) are active. And looking at the number of enquiries, visits and already planned sales this year, it appears that 2022 will be another good year.

Due to its diversity, not only because of the famous *mare e monti* (sea and mountains) and 'Whole of Italy in One Region' (as the Le Marche Tourist Board is promoting the region), but also for the diversity of

We see a tendency that owners are less willing to drop the price too much when negotiating

properties for sale, Le Marche property caters to a broad range of clients. Already we can see an increase in enquiries for apartments with a shared pool, and for holiday villas. We are also getting more enquiries about starting a commercial activity like a small complex with three of four apartments, sometimes combined with a restaurant or a B&B. Also, there are a number of first-time investors who are looking for new investment opportunities. All on offer in Le Marche.

Furthermore, in Le Marche, as in other parts of Italy, it is normal to negotiate and try to reduce the asking price. However, we see a tendency that owners are less willing to drop the price too much when negotiating — a development that will most likely continue this year. Still, compared to other regions, you will get better value for money in Le Marche.







Above: Casa Penrose is a charming, builder's finish house located within a short walking distance to Gualdo, near Sarnano

Left: Near San Ginesio, Torre di Necciano is a newbuild villa with a watchtower and stunning views

PROPERTY HOTSPOTS

Concerning where to look in Le Marche, clients generally either have a preference for a property near the coast, where prices tend to be higher, or more inland towards the mountains, where prices are a bit lower and the views are breathtaking. That said, there are some areas of Le Marche where you can have both, and these are also in demand.

Le Marche is a relatively narrow region with good infrastructure, and when your property is located near a *superstrada* or even a provincial road, you can reach the beach, or mountains, relatively quickly (with perfect hiking trails in the Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini). If you also plan to stay in Italy during the wintertime, the region is a great place to go skiing (without having to travel too much). Just keep an eye on the surrounding roads and infrastructure, and check your travel times.

Do not underestimate the so-called 'builders finish' properties: standing properties where the main works like foundations, walls and roof are already done and the construction crane and scaffolding have been removed. These are perfect properties for clients who want to add their own touch without committing to a full restoration project. At the moment, we have quite a few of these in our portfolio.





Property Showcase



VILLA NEAR THE SEA, LE MARCHE

Luxurious 600 sqm villa near the sea, on the hills of the historic coastal town of Senigallia. The villa was completely rebuilt in 1996 in typical Marchegian style using old materials and is equipped with all modern and technical installations according to the latest standards. On the ground floor is the entrance with guest toilet, spacious living room with 17th-century French fireplace, modern fitted kitchen with utility room, and separate dining room with fireplace. On the first floor are 3 bedrooms, each with bathroom with shower and/or jacuzzi. The master bedroom also has a large walk-in wardrobe. Park-like garden with stunning views. Ref. 4322 *Price* €980,000 *Contact* ItaliaCasa ☎ +39 339 101 9042 info@italiacasa.net www.italiacasa.net



RESTORED FARM HOUSE, LE MARCHE

In Genga, in the nature reserve Parco Naturale Regionale Gola della Rossa e di Frasassi, this old stone farmhouse is located on a tarmac road. The interior of the house, with 200 sqm floor space, has been renovated in a contemporary style. There is a living room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. The house also has an intact pizza oven and a barn. The spacious parking space at this house is closed by an electrically operated gate. On the property of 7,000 sqm there is an olive grove with approximately 60 olive trees of different varieties. Beautiful views of nature. Visit our website for more pictures. Ref. 4828

Price €250,000 Contact ItaliaCasa ☎ +39 339 101 9042 info@italiacasa.net www.italiacasa.net



LUXURY APARTMENTS, LE MARCHE

In Vallefoglia, between Pesaro and Urbino, these luxury apartments are in a recently renovated former monastery from around 1500. The stylish building, in a quiet location in the hilly landscape, contains eight luxury apartments – four on the ground floor and four on the first floor. The apartments on the ground floor have been sold and will be completed shortly. The apartments on the first floor, ranging from 115 to 150 sqm, still have to be finished, can be adapted and will be delivered in the spring of 2022. Some of the apartments on the first floor have an extra space on the second floor under the roof. There will be a shared pool. Ref. 4560 *Price* €229,000 *Contact* ItaliaCasa ☎ +39 339 101 9042 info@italiacasa.net www.italiacasa.net



RESTORED VILLA, LE MARCHE

Villa Il Prato in San Ginesio, a restored 320 sqm farmhouse with swimming pool, separate apartment and garage. The villa has natural light-filled interiors and has been designed for flexible use of space. There is an internal separate apartment with independent entry, but the available layout could easily be all one house with 5 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms. The villa has a gated drive, a garage and a wood storage. There is a working pizza oven not far from the swimming pool, so the property is well-equipped for entertaining. The views from the pool are to the southwest and the pool is perfectly placed for maximum sunshine. Ref. 4204

Price €550,000 Contact ItaliaCasa ≈ +39 339 101 9042

info@italiacasa.net www.italiacasa.net



VOLTERRA

Beautiful 3-bedroom 110 sqm corner terraced apartment, part of a recently restored *borgo* converted and divided into 18 units, each with independent garden, meters (water, light and heating), car space and a share of the communal swimming pool. The renovation has been executed according to the Tuscan style with beamed and vaulted ceilings, terracotta floors and exposed stones on the outdoor walls. A perfect place to spend the holidays, completely immersed in the unspoiled countryside and enjoying a panoramic view over Volterra and the surrounding hills. For personal use or even to provide rental income if desired. Ref. 4696

Price €280,000 Contact Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988 sales@casatravella.com www.casatravella.com



SAN SIRO

Lovely 2-bedroom apartment with lake views and use of swimming pool, part of a complex located in a dominant position 200m from Lake Como in the Aqueseria part of San Siro, 5 minutes north of Menaggio with all amenities and less than 90 minutes from Milan airports. You can easily walk to the lake front, where you find the promenade which continues to Menaggio. The golf club at Menaggio can be reached in a quarter of an hour. This is a truly delightful property with magnificent views over the lake, use of the swimming pool and ideal for personal use or even to provide rental income if desired. Ref. 4916

Price €335,000 Contact Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988 sales@casatravella.com www.casatravella.com



RIPATRANSONE

This extremely spacious 5 bedroom detached house with parts needing to be finished, and sitting in over ³/₄ acre of beautifully kept garden, is located just outside Ripatransone, some 12km from Adriatic coast and just over the hour to Ancona airport. The house provides about 440 sqm of accommodation over two floors, and is ready to put the finishing touches to some of the 12 rooms available to create either one large property or two separate apartments. Externally, the property sits in 3,500 sqm (about 0.86 acre) of well-maintained garden, with a variety of trees including olives, a small pond and delightful terraces. Ref. 4935

Price €420,000 Contact Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988 sales@casatravella.com www.casatravella.com



BUDONI

This lovely 2 bedroom house on two levels, with large veranda with wooden roof, is in the small seaside village of Porto Ottiolu in northeast Sardinia, just 600 m from the beach and the marina, 5 minutes from Budoni with all amenities, 20 minutes from the Golf Club Puntaldia, and 30 minutes from Olbia airport. The property provides about 80 sqm of accommodation over two floors, will be sold fully furnished and has an emergency water reserve. This lovely house within walking distance to the beach, the Marina and all services is ideal as a holiday home or even to provide rental income if desired. Ref. 4697

Price €175,000 Contact Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988 sales@casatravella.com www.casatravella.com



#17

ASSISI

The birthplace of the Catholic friar St Francis remains a **globally important site** of Christian pilgrimage

ssisi stands atop Mount Asio and is flanked by swathes of Umbria's undulating green pasture and the forests of Monte Subasio. At times it seems perched heaven-like, on a carpet of clouds. It is Roman in origin, yet a city belonging to its son, Saint Francis of Assisi, the 12th-century 'second Christ' and today's patron saint of animals and the environment.

The city's cobbled streets lead to the Basilica di San Francesco, the two-storeyed church built to honour the saint – a site still revered by pilgrims from around the world. Enshrined within its walls are 28 frescoes depicting Saint Francis's humble life. Their vibrant colours glow as if the brushstrokes placed by Giotto, Simone Martini, Lorenzetti and Cimabue dried just yesterday.

A further steep ascent finds the Rocca Maggiore fortress, which provided Assisi's ultimate line of defence. From here, the endless panoramic views over the Umbrian plains span out below. Before them the pink-striped Basilica di Santa Chiara, which houses the remains of Saint Clare, a contemporary of Saint Francis and founder of the Order of Poor Clares; and Santa Maria degli Angeli, the birthplace of the Franciscan Order and protector of the Porziuncola chapel, a church within a church, where Saint Francis drew his last breath.

UNESCO sites often preserve the physical. However, this city site is unique in its honouring of the intangible spirituality shaped by the Franciscan Order and its devotion to peace and tolerance – a universal message that traverses the centuries.



Want to guarantee your next issue of Italia! and save money? Then turn to page 30 to subscribe

DON'T MISS ITALIA! ISSUE 197 – ON SALE 5 MAY









MOΠΤΕΠΑΡΟLΕΟΠΕ

Be Nature's Guest

Surrounded by olive groves in the heart of Puglia, experience the rustic charms of family-run Masseria Montenapoleone, an organic agriturismo with the warmest of welcomes.

Immerse yourself in the life of this traditional Puglian farmhouse: explore its secret corners, savour its produce, wine and olive oil and enjoy its authentic hospitality.

Stay for a while, remember for a lifetime.





